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THE ORIGIN
OF THE
MUSALMANS OF BENGAL

THE ORIGIN
OF THE
MUSALMANS OF BENGAL:

BEING A TRANSLATION OF

“HAQIQATE MUSALMAN-I-BENGALAH.”

BY

KHONDKAR FUZLI RUBBEE,

DEWAN TO H. H. THE NAWAB BAHADUR OF MURSHIDABAD, G.C.I.E.

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PREFACE.

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As there are more Musalmans in Bengal than in any other province or part of India, several attempts have been made to find a cause for this preponderance of the Musalman population of Bengal and also to trace their origin. But as no books have hitherto been published to throw light upon this subject, persons are generally apt, from want of correct information, to form erroneous opinions in the matter, and to offer in explanation any hypothesis which may happen to suggest itself to their imagination. I therefore commenced a diligent search among the pages of the histories and chronicles of Bengal, and obtained much of the requisite information, and I have thus felt encouraged to write the present work. I further gathered as much information as possible from sources other than the above, and have collected and condensed them all in this concise work which I have, entitled *Haqqate Musalman-i-Bengalah*, or “The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal.” Should the reader detect any error in the following pages, I would trust to his indulgence for forgiveness, and would request to be apprised thereof in view to its rectification in the future.

PREFACE.

I gratefully acknowledge the valuable help rendered to me, in the progress of this work, by my younger brother, Khondkar Ali Hyder, and my friend, Mirza Farrukh Saheb, of Delhi, and also to Moulvie Alqadari Syed Hasibul Hossain, B.A.. Author of the "Priceless Pearls," the "Lament of Islam," etc. who rendered valuable help in the translation of this work.

KHONDKAR FUZLI RUBBEE,

Murshidabad.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE MUSALMANS OF BENGAL.

INTRODUCTION.

ACCORDING to the results arrived at by the Census of 1891 there were 23,658,347 Musalmans in the province of Bengal. Of this total there were in Bengal Proper 19,577,481, in Behar 3,504,487, in Orissa 92,468, in Chutia Nagpore 257,809, and in the Tributary States under the Government of Bengal (*viz.*, Kuch Behar, the several Hill Tracts and the Native States in Orissa and Chutia Nagpore) 183,670.

The entire Musalman population of India was returned in 1891 at fifty millions. Of this aggregate, something less than a half, 23,658,347, Musalmans, were in Bengal, Behar and Orissa, and 19,577,481 in Bengal Proper alone. Thus the number of Musalmans in Bengal Proper amounts to more than one-third of the entire Musalman population of India.

Adjoined are detailed abstract statements of the Musalman populations as belonging to the several divisions and districts of Bengal.

Detailed Statement of the Musalmans of Bengal according to the Report of Census, 1891.

Divisions.	Districts.	Number of Musalmans in each district.	Total.
Burdwan	Burdwan	267,224	999,191
	Bankoora	45,312	
	Birbhoom	169,752	
	Midnapore	171,412	
	Hoochli	192,685	
	Howrah	152,806	
Presidency	24-Pergunnahs	690,815	4,214,161
	Calcutta	203,173	
	Nadia	947,390	
	Jessore	1,150,135	
	Murshidabad	618,653	
	Khulna	603,995	
Rajshahye	Deenajpore	802,597	5,025,330
	Rajshahye	1,033,927	
	Rangpore	1,295,411	
	Bogra	661,100	
	Pubna	999,839	
	Darjeeling	10,011	
Dacca	Jalpaigoori	222,475	6,429,017
	Dacca	1,473,799	
	Faridpore	1,096,030	
	Bakarganj	1,462,712	
	Maimansing	2,396,476	
	Chittagong	924,849	
Chittagong	Noakhali	760,597	2,909,782
	Tippera	1,224,336	

Divisions.	Districts	Number of Musalmans in each district.	Total.
Patna	Patna ...	201,086	1,806,122
	Gaya ...	226,705	
	Shahabad ...	148,459	
	Darbhanga ...	338,667	
	Muzaffarpore ...	332,873	
	Saran ...	291,013	
	Champaran ...	267,319	1,698,365
Bhagulpore	Bhagulpore ...	195,591	
	Monghyr ...	191,770	
	Purnea ...	805,267	
	Meldah ...	384,651	
	Sonthal Pergunnahs ...	121,086	
Summary	Bengal Proper ...	19,577,481*	23,658,347
	Behar ...	3,504,187	
	Orissa ...	92,946	
	Chutia Nagpore ...	277,809	
	Kuch Behar ...	170,746	
	Orissa Tributary States ...	6,191	
	Chutia Nagpore Tributary State ...	6,733	
	Grand Total ...	.....

The fact is apt to escape ordinary attention that in Bengal Proper the Mahommedans have an actual numerical majority of the population. On reference to the Administration Report of the Bengal Government recently published, I find that the Hindus in Bengal itself number 18,068,655, whilst the Mahommedans are put down at 19,582,349, an excess in their favour of more than one million. In Behar the Hindus are in

* Including the following divisions:—Burdwan, Presidency, Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahye.

a very large majority, more than 6 to 1, whilst in Orissa and Chutia Nagpore the Mahommedans are mere fractions of the community. The causes which have kept them out of Orissa and Chutia Nagpore have operated to reduce their numbers in Western Bengal, where I find the population thus divided between the two great classes :—

<i>Hindus</i>	...	...	6,399,969
<i>Mahommedans</i>	...	...	999,191

Taking the three provinces, I find that in Behar and Orissa, and the districts of Chutia Nagpore and Western Bengal, there are only five millions of Mahommedans, as against about 32 millions of Hindus. But in Central and Eastern Bengal the proportion is largely in favour of Mahommedans. For the whole of the territories administered by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, the population is thus divided :—

<i>Hindus</i>	...	...	45,217,618
<i>Mahommedans</i>	...	...	23,658,347

Central and Eastern Bengal comprise the four divisions or Commissionerships of the Presidency, Rajshahye, Dacca and Chittagong, and in these the population is divided as follows :—

<i>Mahommedans</i>	...	...	18,583,158
<i>Hindus</i>	...	...	11,668,686

In investigating the causes why there are such large numbers of Musalmans in Bengal and also in ascertaining their origin, viz., as to whether their ancestors were native Hindus of this country who embraced Islam, or whether they are the descendants of the Musalmans of other countries who came and domiciled here, it is

necessary to take into consideration (i) the evidence furnished by history ; (ii) various Musalman traits and characteristics ; (iii) the ethnological features and characteristics of these Musalmans, and (iv) the particulars of their families.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

It is mentioned in Chapter VII of *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* that in the year 600 A.H., corresponding with 1203 A.D., the first Mahomedan conquest of Bengal was effected by Bakhtyar Khilji, under the guidance of Kutbuddin Aibak, the Emperor of India at that time.

Mahomed Bakhtyar Khilji was one of the grantees of Ghor. He came to Ghazni during the reign of Sultan Ghias-ud-din Mahomed Sam, and after staying there for a short time, proceeded to India and attached himself to Malik Moazzam Hissam-ud-din, who was one of the most eminent grantees of Sultan Shahab-ud-din. Through the influence of this chief he obtained some *pergunnahs* as *jagir* in the Doab, and as rewards for his valour and prowess he had the fiefs of Kambila and Betali conferred on him. In character he was very courageous, munificent and prudent. He was frequently engaged in expeditions against the turbulent and haughty chiefs of Behar and carried away great booty and wealth. Thus in a short time he became possessed of the means of magnificence and grandeur.

Many former inhabitants of Ghor, Ghazni and Khorasan, who on account of revolutions in their own

countries had migrated to, and taken to a roving life in, India, flocked to Mahomed Bakhtyar Khilji on hearing the rumour of his intrepidity and justice. These marauders contributed in a great measure to consolidate his power and strengthen his position. When Kutbud-din Aibak, who was then Emperor of Delhi, received news of these events, he sent *Khilat* (*i.e.*, robes of honour and other gifts) to Mahomed Bakhtyar in token of his approbation of the latter's conduct. This imperial favour further strengthened his hands. He now subjugated the whole of Behar, effaced all vestige of Hindu power in that principality, and established a Musalman government in it. He invaded Bengal in 1203 A.D., and conquered the tracts known as Rarh and Barend. From early times Bengal was divided into three parts, *viz.*, Rarh, Barend and Bangodesh. When Mahomed Bakhtyar invaded Bengal, its ruler was Lachman Rai, who held his Court in the city of Nadia. This city as well as Luckhnawati was in Rarh, as has been mentioned in the *Tabâquât-i-Nâsirî* :—

“The territory of Luckhnawti has two wings on either side of the river Ganges. They call the western wing Rarh, and the city of Luckhnawti lies on that side, and the eastern wing is named Barend or Barendah and contains the city of Deokot.”

It is stated in *Ferishta* that Rai Lachman had the seat of his government at Nadia which is in the territory of Luckhnawti. It is mentioned in *Tabâquât-i-Nâsirî* that a number of astrologers and Brahmîns presented themselves before the Rajah and represented to him that in the books of their ancient sages it was foretold that the country would fall into the hands of

the Turks (*i.e.*, Musalmans), and that when that time should come, the reigning Rajah should submit to them, so that the inhabitants might escape from the molestation of the Musalmans.

The Rajah asked the astrologers whether any token had been given in the books of their ancients with regard to the leader of the Moslem troops, by which to arrive at a correct conclusion. They replied that the indications of this leader would be that when he stood upright and let down his hands along his sides his fingers would reach beyond the point of his knee-joint. On receiving this answer Lachman deputed trustworthy persons to make investigation in this matter, and upon enquiry they found Mahomed Bakhtyar to possess the peculiarity ascribed to him, and informed the Rajah accordingly. The report produced a great commotion among the Brahmins and wise men, chiefs and lords of the country, and they retired in all haste to Jagunnath, Kamroop, and other remote places, which promised a safe and secure asylum. In fine, all the Brahmins who found it possible quitted their homes and settled in other provinces. But the idea of relinquishing his hereditary dominions and his home, after the manner of the Brahmins, was not agreeable to the Rajah, and he lingered in his capital until Mahomed Bakhtyar pressing on from Behar entered his capital city of Nadia and penetrated to the very gates of his palace. The Rajah then fled from his kingdom towards Bikrampore in Bangodesh. Mahomed Bakhtyar afterwards subjugated Luckhnawti and other territories, and caused the *khotba* to be read, and also struck coins in his

own name. He caused the Musalmans who had come with him to settle in his newly-acquired dominions, as also such as joined him from time to time.*

Sir W. Hunter has written, on the authority of Dr. Blochmann, in his Statistical Accounts of Dacca, that the provinces of Barend and Rarh were conquered by the Musalmans in 1203 A.D., and the western tract called Bangodesh was subjugated by Mahomed Tughlak Shah in 1330 A.D.; and he made Gaur, Satgaun and Sonargaun respectively the seats of his Government.

From this time, namely, the year 1203 A.D., when the Moslem rule was first established in Bengal and the country began to be peopled with Musalman inhabitants,† down to the year 1765 A.D., when the

* Malik Bakhtyar made Kasba Deogadh his capital, and granted to his relatives considerable *wafi tenement* in that district.—*From the History of Soobah Behar.*

† In *Asiatic Society's Journal*, January 1847, page 76 :—

Dr. Buchanan supposes that the Hindu Princes of Bengal continued to govern at Sonargaun, long after they had lost possession of the western portion of their kingdom, and that this part of the province was not annexed to the dominions of the Mahommedan conquerors of the country until the time of Ferid-ud-din Soor Shere Shah. It is well known, however, that there were Mahommedan Governors of the Eastern division of Bengal prior to the reign of Shere Shah, and that Sonargaun was in subjection to them as early as the year 1279. It is probable, indeed, that there were Mahommedans in this part of Bengal, at a period long anterior to the conquest of the country by Bakhtyar Khilji in 1203. We are told that the Arabian merchants of Bussora carried on an extensive maritime commerce with India and China as early as the 8th century, and that many of them settled in the countries which they visited. Dr. Robertson, in speaking of Mahommedan traders in the East at this time, states: "They were so numerous in the city of Canton, that the Emperor (as Arabian authors relate) permitted them to have a Cadi or

English acquired the Diwani, that is, for a period of 562 years, the Moslem sway uninterruptedly prevailed in this country.

From the time of the government of Mahomed Bakhtyar Khilji down to that of Kadr Khan, Bengal formed a dependency of the throne of Delhi. During this period the Emperor of Delhi used to appoint Viceroys to govern Bengal. But in 1340 A.D. it became an independent kingdom under Sultan Fakhr-uddin, who assumed supreme power and set up as an independent monarch. Bengal retained its independence intact until it was subverted by Akbar in 1576 A.D., after the defeat of its ruler Daud Shah.

From this time down to the year 1765 A. D., when the East India Company obtained the Diwani of Bengal, the country remained subject to the control of the Mughal Emperors, and the Court of Delhi used to appoint the Nazims of Bengal. But even

Judge of their own sect, who decided controversies among his countrymen by their own laws and presided in all the functions of religion. In other places proselytes were gained to the Mahomedan faith and the Arabian language was understood and spoken in almost every seaport of any note." (Robertson's "Ancient India," page 102). There is reason to believe, from this circumstance, that Bengal was the seat of a colony of Mahomedan merchants at this early period. This may be inferred from the extensive commerce it enjoyed with the countries of the West from early times; from the great value of its products; and above all, from the distinct allusion made to it by the two Mahomedan travellers of the 9th century. It is mentioned by them "as the country of a king named Rami, who possessed a great number of elephants. Its exports consisted of fine cotton garments, (Dacca muslins) lign aloes, (Aggur wood) saffle skins (Otter skins) and rhinoceros horns, all of which were to be purchased for shells, (Cowries) which were the current money of the country."

during this interval—when Nadir Shah, King of Iran, invaded India in the reign of the Emperor Mahmud Shah—Shuja Khan, who was then Governor of Bengal, threw off his allegiance to the throne of Delhi and assumed independence. This independence of the country lasted until it passed into the hands of the English.

During this period of 562 years, namely, from the advent of the Moslems down to that of the English in this country, different Musalman dynasties held in succession the imperial sway at Delhi. The first period (during which Mahomed Bakhtyar conquered Bengal) was that of the Ghorian dynasty which became extinct with the reign of Kykobad. It was succeeded in 1288 A.D. by the Khilji dynasty, which in turn gave place in 1321 to the Tughlak dynasty which ruled until 1414, and was followed by the Syiad dynasty which was replaced in 1526 by the Mughal dynasty or the House of Timoor.

A chronological list of the Governors, Kings and Nazims of Bengal and also of the Emperors of Delhi follows :

*Chronological list of the Governors, Independent Kings,
and the Nazims of Bengal and also of the Emperors
of Delhi.*

A.D.	A.H.	Nazims of Bengal.	Emperors.
1203	600	Mahomed Bukhtyar Khilji...	Kutb-ud-din Aibak.

MAHOMED BAKHTYAR ESTABLISHED HIS CAPITAL AT GHOR.

1205	602	Mahomed Shirin, entitled ... Aiz-ud-din Khilji.	Kutb-ud-din Aibak
1208	605	Ali Murdan Khan Khilji ...	Do.
1212	609	Hisam-ud-din Hosain, entitled Sultan Ghias-ud-din Khilji.	Arâm Shab, son of Kutb-ud-din Aibak.

Sultan Ghias-ud-din caused the *khotba* to be read on his own behalf and coins to be struck in his own name in the territory of Luckhnawti.

1227	624	Nâsir-ud-din Shah, son of Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash.	Shams-ud-din Altamash.
1229	627	Izzat-ud-din Malik Ala-ud-din Tughlaq.	Do.
1237	634	Alauddin Tughlaq Khan...	Sultana Razia, daughter of Shams-ud-din Altamash.
1244	642	Malick Kara Beg Timur Khan.	Bahram Shah, son of Shams-ud-din Altamash.

A.D.	A.H.	Nazims of Bengal.	Emperors.
1246	644	Malick Saif-ud-din ...	Sultan Nâsir-ud-din Mahmood, son of Shams-ud-din Altamash.
1253	651	Malick Uzbek ...	Do.
1257	656	Malick Jalal-ud-din...	Do.
1258	659	Arsalan Khan ...	Do.
1260	659	Tatar Khan, son of Arsalan Khan.	Do.
1277	676	Tughral ...	Sultan Ghias-ud-din Bulban.

After the resources of the aged Sultan Ghias-ud-din had been exhausted in repelling the invasion of Changiz Khan's Mughals, Tughral, who was munificent and crafty, strengthened his own position and assuming independence caused the *khotba* to be read on his behalf.

After this, Sultan Ghias-ud-din invaded Bengal in person killed Tughral and bestowed the kingdom on his son Boghra Khan, making over to him at the same time all the spoils that had been taken except the stud of elephants and the treasure, which he appropriated to himself. He placed the royal umbrella over his son's head, in whose name he also caused the *khotba* to be read and coins to be struck. He gave the following parting counsel to his son :—(1) That the ruler of Luckhnawti should not rebel against the authority of the Emperor of Delhi, whether that monarch belonged to his own or to a different family ; that whenever that Emperor happened to advance upon Luckhnawti, its ruler should retire to some safe place ; and that when the Emperor evacuated the country he should then return to his dominions and seek to promote his own objects. (2) That he should observe moderation and justice in exacting tribute from his subjects ; that is to say, he should neither take so little as to embolden the obstinate to demur, nor should he demand so much that it might press heavily on the subjects. In a word, he should levy such tribute

of government fell into his hands. Seeing the Emperor thus lost in luxury and pleasure and totally neglecting State affairs, Malick Nizam-ud-din conceived a desire to seize the throne ; and as a step towards the achievement of this end, sowed the seeds of distrust and discord between the Emperor and his Ameers ; and succeeded in getting rid of most of the latter as were loyal and faithful, causing them (by fabricating against them charges of various kinds) either to be put to death, or to be exiled or imprisoned in distant and remote places.

When Nâsir-ud-din Boghra Khan heard the news of his son's negligent behaviour and the great power wielded by Malick Nizam-ud-din, he wrote to his son, from Bengal, expostulating with him on the impropriety of his conduct. Finding all his remonstrances ineffectual, he set out in person towards Delhi. Malick Nizam-ud-din, by his machinations, all but succeeded in bringing about a rupture between the father and the son, but happily he failed in his purpose, and at last the father and the son had a friendly meeting. After a brief halt, the father marched back to Bengal, having given some wholesome counsel to his son, who thereupon returned to his Capital City, Delhi. But as soon as Nâsir-ud-din was gone, Kykobad consigned all his good advice to oblivion and relapsed into his former evil ways.

When the former heard of his son's relapse into luxury and sensuality, he despaired both of his life and the stability of his government.

About this time Malick Nizam-ud-din was assassinated by means of poison, and Kykobad became a

prey to paralysis and apoplexy as a consequence of his drunken and intemperate habits. During his illness some of the powerful Ameers conceived hopes of seizing the throne ; but the other Ameers coming speedily to an agreement brought his son, named Kyoomoors, who was but three years old, from the harem, and placing him on the throne, styled him Shams-ud-din. Now the Ameers became divided into two factions, the party of the Khiljis sided with Jalal-ud-din Feroze Shah, while that of the Turks took up the cause of Kyoomoors.

The partizans of Jalal-ud-din Feroze Khilji seized the person of Kyoomoors, and wrapped Kykobad, who had still a remnant of life left, in a blanket and, having suffocated him, threw his body into the Jumna.

At this time the Imperial sway passed from the hands of the Ghori slaves to the house of Khilji.

When Sultan Fakhr-ud-din withdrew his allegiance from the throne of Delhi and established an independent sovereignty in Bengal and became the absolute master of the country and its revenues, Mahomed Tughlak was then the Emperor of India. This Emperor's slaughter of the ecclesiastics and Syyads and of the men of the civil and military professions gained him such notoriety, and the country became so filled with his cruelty and tyranny, that numerous families came from Hindustan and went to seek shelter in Bengal. Moreover, during the reign of this monarch severe famines occurred twice in Delhi and its dependencies, and all the population thereof fled to Bengal to avoid the disasters of these famines. In

the adjacent plains. The king in his perplexity summoned the troops of Amroha, Samanah, Kole and Baran, and Khaja Jahan also joined the king with the troops of Delhi. The king drew up his force for battle, and Emin-ul-Mulk and his brothers also having crossed the Ganges came to meet him in the hope that as the people were disaffected with the king they might make common cause with them. On the following day they set their forces in battle array in the plains of Kanauj. The king became enraged at their audacity, and determining their utter destruction rode against them in person. Emin-ul-Mulk and his brothers were completely astounded when they were informed of this fact, and after making only a short stand took to flight. Emin ul-Mulk himself was captured alive. One of his brothers, named Shukrullah Khan, who had been wounded, was drowned in the waters of the Ganges, and his other brother died in the flight. Some (of the rebel host) with their horses and accoutrements found watery graves, and those who got to the other shore, more dead than alive, met with their death, being killed by a sea monster. The king declared there was no vice in Emin-ul-Mulk, but that he had been instigated to it by others. He consequently called him to his presence, and after presenting him with a horse and robes of honor appointed him to the government of extensive territories. From this place the king went to Bahreich, and from thence he sent Khaja Jahan to precede him in the direction of Luckhnawti and to prevent those of Emin-ul-Mulk's troops who had escaped the edge of the sword from going into that territory."

During the reigns of Sultan Shams-ud-din Bhangra, Sultan Sikandar, son of Sultan Shams-ud-din, Sultan Ghias-ud-din, son of Sultan Sikandar, Sultan Nâsir-ud-din and Sultan Barbak, much consideration used to be shown towards the gentry and nobility. For this reason and also on account of other excellent qualities of these sovereigns, numbers of persons of good families came, from time to time, from their own countries and settled

in Bengal.* Detailed particulars of these events will be found in the accounts of the reigns of these rulers.

Syud Sharif of Mecca, entitled Sultan Ala-ud-din, and commonly called Hassan Shah Badshah, himself belonged to a very high and respectable family and was unequalled in learning and personal excellencies. During his reign Bengal attained to a highly flourishing and prosperous condition, and innumerable Musalmans of all orders poured into Bengal from every region and clime. This king, in particular, used to confer great benefits on persons belonging to good and ancient families, and throughout Bengal appointed Syud, Mughal and Afghan *ammals* (officers), and allotted a good deal of rent-free lands to the Moslem religious leaders. When Hosain Shah Sharki of Jamepore reached Koholgaun, in the territory of Luckhnawti, after being defeated and pursued up to the frontier of Behar by Sultan Sikandar, Emperor of Delhi, Ala-ud-din Hosain Shah, who was then ruler of Bengal, received him honourably and maintained him in a way befitting his rank and dignity, and provided him with the means of comfort and luxury, so that the ex-ruler, abandoning his sovereign claims, passed the rest of his life in Bengal.† Another refugee of rank, Hosain Khan Kirmili, Governor of Saran, came to Luckhnawti, with his adherents and dependants, owing to the hostile feelings evinced towards him by Sultan Sikandar, and took refuge with Hosain Shah, King of Bengal.

* See *History of Bengal*, by C. Stewart, p. 72.

† See *History of Bengal*, by C. Stewart, p. 74.

In the reign of Sultan Nasrat Shah, son of Sultan Ala-ud-din Hosain Shah, King Humayoon, having invaded India, slew the Emperor Ibrahim Lodi and threw the whole empire into convulsions and confusion, and became master of most parts of Hindustan. In consequence of this confusion and the revolution in the government, many nobles and principal men of the realm, fled into Bengal to seek the protection of Sultan Nasrat Shah. Even the very family of the late Emperor Ibrahim Lodi took shelter in this country, and his daughter was married to Sultan Nasrat Shah. These circumstances have been related in the *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* thus :—

“When the King Nasiruddin Mahomed Humayoon slew Ibrahim Shah Lodi, son of Sikandar Lodi, and became master of the vast empire of Hindustan, most of the Afghan nobles fled into Bengal and placed themselves under the protection of Nasrat Shah, and at last Sultan Mahmood, brother of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, went also to Bengal. All these, according to their respective ranks and positions, and so far as circumstances allowed, received assignments of suitable *pergunnahs* and villages; and the daughter of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, who through the recent disturbances had been driven into that country, became wedded to King Nasrat Shah.”

The practice also prevailed during the reigns of the monarchs belonging to the house of Sher Shah that whichever of the Ameeris had to fly from Delhi, he used to come to Bengal for protection, as is thus related in the chronicles of the reign of Shah Mahomed, commonly called Adli Shah :—

“That on the same day Taj Khan Karani, who was one of the principal Ameeris of Salim Shah, issuing from the Dewan

Khana of Fort Gowaliar. was going away, when Shah Mahomed Kirmili met him near the gate and questioned him relative to his condition. Taj Khan told him (in reply): 'Circumstances have taken an adverse turn, and I have withdrawn myself from these affairs. Come you also and unite with me.' Shah Mahomed did not agree to his proposal, and went to make his homage to Adli Shah, and he met there with such fate as he did. While Taj Khan Karani, having quitted the Fort, had been proceeding in the direction of Bengal, Adli was meditating the capture of Ibrahim Khan Sur, who lived in great pomp and grandeur. His wife, who was the sister of Adli, being apprised of this fact, warned her husband of it. Ibrahim Khan then flying from Chatar, set off for the presence of his father, Ghazi Khan, who held the government of Handoon. Adli Isa Khan Niazi went in pursuit, and overtaking him near Kalpi, fighting took place between them, in which Isa Khan being worsted, desisted from further pursuit. Ibrahim Khan Sur collecting an army seized the throne; and having caused the *Khotba* to be read on his own behalf, he pressed from that place upon Agra; and having become possessed of the adjoining territories, perfectly consolidated his power. He then assumed the title of Ibrahim Shah and raised the standard of royalty."

"Hemu, grocer, the Wazir of Adli, considered the expulsion of King Ibrahim necessary, broke his power near Kalpi. King Ibrahim made use of a pretext for going to his father. Hemu, grocer, advancing upon that place, laid siege to it for three months. But since Mahomed Khan Sur, Governor of Bengal, having raised the standard of hostility, had advanced to subjugate Chatar, Jaunpore and Kalpi, Adli recalled Hemu the grocer, who in obedience to this summons then raised the siege. King Ibrahim then went towards the territory of Patna, and having fought an engagement with Rajah Ram Chander, the Rajah of the place, was taken prisoner. Rajah Ram Chander, acting upon the policy of the time, seated him with utmost respect upon his own throne and acted towards him like a servant. After some time quarrels arose between the

Afghans of Bayanah, who lived within the limits of Ryseen and Ayaz Bahadur, the Governor of Malwa. The former (party in contention) sent a deputation to Rajah Ram Chander, and got Ibrahim Shah among them and made him their chief. They wished to call in the aid of Doorgawati, Rani of Gadhyya, and then make war with Ayaz Bahadur. She accepted their invitation and marched out of her territory. Ayaz Bahadur despatched his emissaries to her and made her turn away from her purpose. When Ibrahim Shah saw that Rani Doorgawati, repenting of her proceedings, had gone back to her territory, he did not consider his longer stay there would be prudent, and consequently went to Orissa, which is one of the outlying territories of Bengal, and there he ended his days."

Sikandar Shah Sur, who was last of the line of Afghan monarchs, and at the end of whose reign the empire passed from the House of Sher Shah to that of Timoor, abandoning his throne, fled into Bengal, after being defeated by Jalal-ud-din Akbar, as would appear from the following extract from *Turikh-i-Ferishtah* :—

"It so happened at that time that Humayoon Badshah bent his course towards the Panjab, and Tatar Khan fled from Ruhtas to Delhi *en route* for the Panjab. The Mughal followers of Humayoon having advanced up to Lahore dispersed the Afghans, and having extended their conquest up to Sirhind brought those tracts under their control. Sikandar Shah sent an army of fifty thousand troops (or, according to other accounts, one hundred thousand Afghans and Rajput horsemen) under the command of Tatar Khan and Hybat Khan for the expulsion of the Chaghtai host.

"The Afghans were totally routed, and having turned their horses' heads they did not draw rein until they arrived at Delhi. Although Sikandar Shah was perfectly aware of the hostile feelings of his Ameers, yet, acting upon the requirements of necessity, he assembled an army sixty thousand strong and marched towards the Panjab in 962 A.H. He encountered

Byram Khan, Turkoman, who was in the retinue of Prince Jalal-ud-din Mahomed Akbar near Sirhind, and, being put to the rout, retired to the mountains of Swalak. Thus for the second time the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Agra passed into the hands of the Ameer of King Humayoon, and the world became so adorned with beauties and charms as to vie with the gardens of Paradise. Through the well-aimed efforts of Byram Khan, Turkoman, Sikandar Shah Sur was dislodged from the mountain of Swalak, whence he fled towards Gaur and Bengal. He took possession of those territories, and after a short time died there, and Taj Khan Karani became the ruler of Bengal in his place."

In the same history the following particulars are given in the accounts of the reign of the Emperor Akbar :—

"After the siege of the Fort of Mankot had lasted for six months, Sikandar Shah was reduced to the necessity of soliciting the deputation of a trustworthy nobleman to him, so that after having submitted his terms through him he might act according as he might be ordered. Accordingly Khan-i-Azam Shams-ud-din Mahmud Khan Atka went to the fort. Sikandar told him, 'Owing to the multiplicity of my crimes I cannot venture into the King's presence, but I wish to send my son Shaikh Abdur Rahman to the Court and myself to withdraw to Bengal and live there in submission.' Khan-i-Azam Shams-ud-din came back and conveyed these proposals to the King, who accepted them. Shaikh Abdur Rahman came to the King's presence in the month of Ramazan 964, and offered some elephants as a present, and Sikandar Shah took the opportunity to go to Bengal."

In order to weaken the power of the learned men and other leaders of Islam, the Emperor Akbar used to collect them and send them away to Bengal, as the following fact, written by Abdul Kader Badwani in his accounts

of the Emperor Akbar on page 278 of *Mantakhabat Tawarikh*, shows :—

“In the reign of the Emperor Akbar, the learning itself, which men acquired, became the cause of their misfortune and decline. The Emperor used to order all the learned and holy men and spiritual leaders of the people to be brought into his Court and to enquire himself into the means of their subsistence and profession, and, closely conversing with them both in public and private with usual regard, settled some land upon them as he thought proper. Those whom he knew to be in the habit of gathering disciples or keeping company with them in the *Majlis* (assembly) *Sama* or *Kulalic* (an assembly in the form of a circle when religious songs are sung to excite the hearers) he held them to be professional traders, and either shut them in the forts or transported them to Bengal and Behar, and things of this sort were always happening during his reign. All the aged and frail peers and sheiks (holy and pious men) were objects of much more pity than the other people ; but the details of all this are too lengthy to be mentioned here.

“In obedience to such royal orders the *Sufis*, *Sahib Sama* (i.e. devotees and saints who held *Majlis-i-Sama* and devotions towards God) were brought under the control and order of the Hindu officers, and were reduced to such misery that they forgot their own position ; and being exiled from their homes entered into the mouse-holes, that is, hid themselves in nooks and corners, and their circumstances were completely changed.”

Daud Shah, son of Soliman Shah, was the last of the kings of Bengal. Daud Shah had a numerous retinue of servants and followers, and his power and resources were so great that he had 40,000 well-mounted cavalry, 300 elephants and 140,000 infantry including artillery-men, musqueteers, archers and bowmen ; he had besides 20,000 pieces of ordnance, most of which were

battering guns, a considerable number of war vessels and other implements of war.—*From Riaz-us-Salatin.* In the reign of Akbar, and in the year 984 A. H. he was captured by Khan Jahan Khan in Bengal and put to death. After this event, Bengal came under the sway of the Mughal or Timurian dynasty. Henceforth Nazims or Governors of Turanian and Arab origin used to be appointed by the Court of Delhi to govern Bengal. During the administration of these Musalman Nazims and rulers, large numbers of Musalmans came from various countries and settled here, more especially during the administration of Nawab Ameer-ul-Omara Shaista Khan. Owing to his benefactions towards persons of birth and family, the country became inhabited by a large number of Musalmans of noble origin, and he conferred upon them numerous estates in the shape of freehold villages and tenements.

During the government of Suja-ud-din Mahammad Khan, Nadir Shah, King of Persia, invaded India and sacked Delhi and other cities. Most of the inhabitants of Delhi and the surrounding parts fled at that time into Bengal to seek the protection of Suja-ud-din Mahammad Khan. This ruler accorded liberal treatment to these refugees and conferred great benefits upon them. This gave a new impetus to the influx of immigrants, as would appear from the following extract from *Tarikh-i-Mansoori* :—

“No sooner did any stranger come into his dominions than he used to get notice both of his arrival and whether the new-comer was a person of good lineage and ability. After the arrival of such a person at Murshidabad, he used to wait for three days to see if the stranger possessed any interest with any

of the officers of the Court ; and if so, if anyone spoke of him, he used to send for him and promote his objects ; otherwise on the fourth day he himself, making mention of the stranger, remarked that perhaps none of the audience had familiarity or acquaintance with him, or else some one must have spoken about him. Even then, if anyone gave sufficient information about him, so much the better, or else he would himself send some one to procure information concerning him, and also to carry the message to him that, as he had chanced to come to his dominions, he might as well come to see him. He then secretly procured information as to his manners and means ; and after having become acquainted with all the necessary particulars regarding him, he questioned him regarding his intentions. If he thought that he purposed adhering to him and wanted employment, he received him into his service in a most cordial and gracious manner, and forthwith supplied him with moderate funds for his necessary expenses, intimating to him at the same time that in this country such a small sum suffices (to cover all one's necessary expenses) ; besides, God Almighty has the power to give yet more. It was his wonted practice that whenever he sent a present to any person, if the bearer accepted any reward or gratuity from the receiver, he took to task both the bearer and the receiver for it. In fact he himself treated his servants with such a degree of liberality that hardly any of them felt any desire for reward. All those courtiers who were known to him by sight used to receive a tray full of dainties and delicacies from the hospitable kitchens of this generous lord, in such order that some received it daily, some on alternate days, and others bi-weekly. This hospitable practice never ceased so long as he lived. He used to keep by himself a note-book, the leaves of which were made of ivory, containing a memorandum of the names of such of his attendants and courtiers as were personally known to him. Every night before going to bed he used to look over these pages, and selecting some of the names therefrom, put down against each, with his own pen, such a sum as was commensurate to the individual's condition, sums which were often

large ; and having issued orders to his revenue officers for the payment of each item of these sums out of the proceeds of the crown lands, apprised the gratuitants or their agents respecting the donation. If he (the receiver of the gift) did not divulge the fact, he rose higher in his regard and esteem ; but whoever did the contrary lost his confidence on account of his untrustworthy behaviour, and without showing any harshness towards him he used to efface the names of such delinquents from the note-book in question and substituted other names in their places. He continued in this practice throughout his life."

Besides these foreign settlers who came to Bengal by land, as indicated in the foregoing pages, numerous people came to this country also by sea.

Hooghly was then the port of Bengal and an anchorage for ships. Most of the comers, from, and returners to, Arabia and other western countries embarked or disembarked at this port. The inhabitants of Bengal and the upper parts of Hindustan as far as Delhi embarked here when going on pilgrimages to Mecca and other places of sanctity. Moreover, people from Iran, Khorasan, Iraq, Arabia and Egypt, who chose to come to Hindustan or Bengal by sea, disembarked here. Thus in process of time Bengal became inhabited by large numbers of foreign Musalmans.

To illustrate these facts I mention here the circumstances of a few of those families who came by this route into Bengal, and proceeding from here to Delhi and other places rose to eminence and distinction.

(1) *The Royal House of Oudh*.—The founder of this dynasty, Mahomed Amin, styled Nawab Burhan-ul-

Mulk Saadat, Khan Bahadur, who belonged to one of the noblest families of Nishapore, came with his father from that place to Bengal and stayed here for some time. After the demise of his father whose tomb still exists in Azimabad (Patna), he proceeded to Delhi and there rose to eminence. The author of *Imad-us-Saadat* relates that Mirza Nasir had two sons by his wife, who was the daughter of Syyyad Sams-ud-din, of Nishapore. One was named Mir Mahomed Bakar and the other Mir Mahomed Ameen. In the year 1118 A.H., Mirza Nasir with his son, Mir Mahomed Bakar, arrived at Bengal on board a ship, and fixed his residence in Azimabad, and used to receive a maintenance allowance from the Government of Shuja-ud-Dowlah Shuja-ud-din Mahomed Khan, Nazim of Bengal. About this time Mir Mahomed Bakar contracted matrimony, and had a son born to him. This boy afterwards received the title of Bashir Jang during the ascendancy of his uncle Burhan-ul-Mulk, and was appointed to the Subadarship of Kashmir by the King of Delhi. In the year 1120 A.H., Mir Mahomed Ameen, who had remained in the territory of Nishapore, came to Bengal with a view to see his venerable father and brother, and met them. Some time later, Mirza Nasir died at Azimabad. After the demise of the father both the brothers left Bengal and proceeded to Shahjahanabad, where gradually they attained to pre-eminent positions. Mir Mahomed Ameen received from Mahomed Shah Badshah the post of a Commander of seven thousand with the title of Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan, and was appointed to the Subadarship of Oudh.

(2) *The Family of Hakim Ulvi Khan, the Royal Physician.*—Hakim Mir Mahomed Hadi, the venerable uncle of Nawab Ulvi Khan, came into Bengal by sea, and was introduced to the presence of Suja-ud-din Mahomed Khan, through the agency of the Foujdar (Commandant) of Hooghly and obtained a situation at the Court. Ulvi Khan had also come with his uncle and was then of a tender age and under his tuition. In course of time Hakim Mir Mahomed Hadi became famous for his learning and reputed for his skill in physics. As Mahomed Shah Badshah wanted an eminent physician and had learnt that the Nazim of Bengal had a skilful medical man about him, he wrote the Nazim to send him to his Court. But as neither Mir Mahomed Hadi was agreeable to go to Delhi, nor was the Nazim, having regard to the good of his own health, willing to part with him, he therefore answered the King to the effect that Hakim Mir Mahomed Hadi, owing to age and infirmity was incapable of undertaking a journey to Delhi, but that he was sending the Hakim's nephew, who had studied medicines under his uncle and was equally proficient in the art. Nevertheless, in case of necessity, Mir Mahomed Hadi would go in person. Ulvi Khan went with the Nazim's petition to the King at Delhi, and the eminence to which he rose and the fame that he acquired there is more evident than the sun itself (*i.e.* too well known to need any mention). The rest of the family of these Hakims remained in Murshidabad and live there up to this day. Nawab Muzaffar Jang, the Naeb Nazim of Bengal, of whom an account is

to be found in the various histories, belonged to this family.

(3) *The Armenian Settlers in Bengal.*—Ages ago the ancestors of these Armenians, flying from the persecution and violence of some one of the kings of Iran, had come from that country to Bengal by way of the sea and settled here, and their descendants have ever since continued to reside in this country.

In a similar way persons belonging to various family stocks and branches have come from different realms and regions and domiciled here. As I have shown in the foregoing pages that Musalman immigrants from the metropolis of Delhi and other places largely stocked the population of Bengal and adopted this country as their own, it appears therefore necessary to take some notice of the political features of those countries from which Musalmans originally came to Delhi.

All Central and Western Asia from Khorasan and Afghanistan to Bagdad, the seat of the Caliphate and Room, which were under Moslem domination, fell into tumult and convulsions owing to the irruption and invasion of Chinghiz Khan and his decendants. From the violence and tyranny of these invaders the life of every man, whether high or low, was in jeopardy. They effaced all trace of Musalmans from every country that fell under their sway and made indiscriminate slaughter of the Musalman inhabitants without any regard to sex or age. Consequently these people fled to other countries for safety ; and because at that time there was a powerful Musalman government in India, most of the refugees therefore fled into this

realm. This fact has been related thus in the *Tabâ-quât-i-Nâsiri** :—

“Notwithstanding that by the will of the Almighty and the decrees of destiny the turn of sovereignty passed unto Chinghiz Khan, the accursed, and his descendants, after the Kings of Iran and Turan, and that the whole of the land of Turan and the East fell under the sway of the Mughals and that the authority of the Mahommedan religion departed from those regions, which became the seat of Paganism, the kingdom of Hindustan, by the grace of Almighty God and the favour of fortune, under the shadow of the guardianship of the *Shamsi* race, and the shade of the protection of the Al-timishi Dynasty, became the focus of the people of Islam, and the orbit of the possessors of religion ; and as from the extremity of the territories of Chin, Mawarannahar, Tukharistan, Zawul, Ghur, Kabul, Ghaznin, Iraq, Tabaristan, Iran, Khurasan the Dyar-i-Bakr and Mansil as far as the boundaries of Rum and Sham, fell into the hands of the infidel Mughals, and not a trace of the Mahommedan Maluks and Sultans of Islam remained in these countries ; The Almighty’s mercy be upon them, and may He long preserve the Nâsiriah dynasty.”

It is further written in the same work that after the events of the year 614, in Khorasan, owing to the invasion and irruption of Chinghiz Khan Mughal, Jalal-ud-din Khwarazm Shah, being defeated and overthrown by the infidel forces, in the year 616 came towards Hindustan.

The same author also narrates as follows :—

“From the very outset of his reign and the dawn of the morning of sovereignty in the congregating of eminent doctors of religion and law, venerable Syysads, Maliks, Ameers,

* Translation of *Tabâquât-i-Nâsiri*, by Major H. G. Raverty, pp. 869—888.

Sadars and (other) great men, the Sultan used yearly to expend about ten millions; and people from various parts of the world he gathered together at the Capital City of Delhi, which is the seat of the Government of Hindustan, and the centre of the circle of Islam, the sanctuary of the *Mandates* and inhibitions of the religion of Mahamet, the kernel of the Mahamadan religion, the marrow of the Ahmadi belief, and the tabernacle of the eastern parts of the universe; guard it O! God, from calamities and molestations. This city, through the number of the grants and unbounded munificence of that pious monarch became the retreat and resting place for the learned and virtuous and the excellent of the various parts of the world; and those who, by the mercy of God the Most High, escaped from the toils and the calamities, sustained by the provinces and cities of Ajam, and the misfortunes caused by the (irruption of the) infidel Mughals, made the capital the asylum of the universe—of that Sovereign their asylum, refuge, resting place, and point of safety; and up to the present day, those same rules are observed and remain unchanged, and such may they ever continue.”

Ferishta, writing on the same subject, relates as follows:—

“At that time, the royal palace was fitted up and adorned, in a style of kingly magnificence, with gold and silver (furniture and ornaments). Persons of dignified position, Syyads, ecclesiastic, illustrious Chiefs, and twenty-five Princes of Iraq, Khorasan and Mawarannahar, who had come to India owing to the disturbances and disorder caused by Chinghiz Khan and lived under his protection, and also many a Rai and Raja stood at a respectful distance from his throne with folded arms. It is related in the *Mulhiquat-i-Nasiri*, written by Shaikh Ainuddin of Bijapore, that this exaltation and good fortune alone were sufficient for (the gratification of) Sultan Ghias-ud-din Balban that those ex-rulers who had come to India in the reigns of the preceding monarchs and moreover fifteen Princes from Turkistan, Mawarannahar, Khorasan, Iraq Azarbaijan, Khwarezm

Room, and Sham, who having been ejected from their seats of power by the aggressions of Chinghiz Khan, had arrived at Delhi during his own reign and been placed in positions of honor and affluence, all stood with utmost joy and cordiality with folded arms before his throne except two princes who sat at the foot of the throne, as they were descended from the Abbaside Caliphs. Whenever any of the princes or illustrious personages of the age happened to come to India during his reign, he was wont to signify his joy and offer thanks to God, and he would assign to each of these a separate quarter of the city (Delhi), so that from their locations fifteen (additional) wards came into existence in Delhi, *viz.* (1), the Abbaside quarter (2), Sanjari quarter (3), Khlwarizmi quarter (4), Delemi quarter (5), Ulvi quarter (6), Atabaki quarter (7), the Ghori quarter (8), Chinghizi quarter (9), Roomi quarter (10), Sunkari quarter (11), Yamani quarter (12), Mosali quarter (13), Samarkandi quarter (14), Kashghari quarter, and (15) Khatai quarter. Because scions of illustrious families and most distinguished personages of the age representing the sword and the pen, and masters of music and art, such as had no match in the four quarters of the world, were assembled at his Court, it therefore was said to possess a decided superiority over that of (Sultan) Mahmood or (Sultan) Sanjar. It is said that all persons of learning and erudition and the doctors of religion assembled at the residence of his eldest son, who was commonly called Khani-Shahid ; while the musicians, ministers to pleasure and story-tellers, wits' jesters and bufoons gathered at the assembly of his other son named Boghra Khan and formed royal pleasure parties."

If the second chapter of the same history is narrated as follows :—

"During the reign of Sultan Mahomed Tughlak, from its commencement to its termination, great and eminent men, artists and those whose fortunes had been wrecked, came to Hindustan, from Iraq, Khorasan, Mawarannahar, Turkistan and Arabia, in the hopes of receiving kind and benevolent

treatment from him, and in fact obtained greater favours than their most sanguine expectations led them to look for."

It will be manifest from the citations made successively in the preceding pages, from various historical works, that owing to the disruption of the Kingdoms of Arabia, Iran, Turkistan and Khorasan, the high and low people of those realms came mostly to India ; and more especially the chief persons of those countries, during those troublous and disastrous times, had to fly to India for the safety of their lives and to avoid dishonour from their enemies. Most of such refugees flocked to Delhi and placed themselves under the protection of successive monarchs. It has also been shown that during the reigns of the Ghori, Khilji, Tughlak, Syiad, Lodi and Mughal emperors, people continued to come into Bengal from Delhi and other parts of India, and it is the unanimous verdict of historians that during the reign of Sultan Kykobad, owing to the revolution of Government, and in the reign of Sultan Mahomed Tughlak, on account of his atrocities and the frequent recurrence of famines, the whole population of Delhi, as it were, came to Bengal. The kings and rulers of Bengal ever treated these comers with consideration, and provided for each in a manner suitable to his condition, either by enrolling him in the State service or by granting him rent-free lands. In this way, when the immigrants gradually swelled into large numbers, they then dispersed over the whole face of the country and fixed their residences and retreats in every part of it. The members of these foreigners received daily accessions from births ; and from the congregations of

their families, towns, villages and hamlets rose into existence.

The kingdom of Gaur in Bengal had long continued very powerful and prosperous, so much so that it had no rival in wealth and affluence. The city of Gaur was extensive and populous. It teemed with noble and high families and persons noted for learning, erudition and genius. A large standing army was also located there. All these various classes of people were Musalmans of foreign origin. The city, moreover, contained various other classes of Musalmans, such as professional men, tradesmen, artizans, &c., &c. In short, while there was a Musalman Government, there were all the necessary appenages thereto, as also men in adequate numbers and of sufficient ability to man and conduct the machinery of Government. It would be simply preposterous to think that the kings were the only Musalmans in the country, and that they had no Musalman courtiers or officers ; or even if they had, that they were only the new Musalman converts of this country.*

* "Raja Kanis,—Immediately after the above-mentioned event, the zemindar, having assumed the title of Raja, advanced to Pandua, where he was greeted by the Hindoos as the restorer of their religion and Sovereign of Bengal ; but after being seated on the throne, he found that the Mahommedans in his dominions were so numerous, and so much superior in bravery to his natural subjects, that he judged it requisite to treat them with mildness and affability : he therefore allowed many of the Afghan chiefs to retain their estates, and granted pensions to the learned and devout of that religion. By these means he enjoyed a quiet and peaceable reign of seven years, and died in the year 794, A.D. 1392."—*History of Bengal*, by C. Stewart, p. 60.

The former rulers of Bengal, during their successive reigns, directed their best endeavours to induce men belonging to their own race and creed to come from all parts of the world and settle in their dominions, with a view to increase and strengthen their own power and position ; and with these men they peopled towns, villages and hamlets. Moreover, the civil and military officers of foreign origin who were appointed by these rulers, each had Musalman relations and followers of his own. This state of things prevailed throughout the very long period that the kingdom of Gaur subsisted ; but on the dissolution and disruption of this kingdom at the establishment of the Mughal dominion, Gaur became involved in the general ruin ; and its population was dispersed in all directions, and each individual established himself in those villages and rural parts where he could get a foothold, and there made some shift to maintain himself. Those, who owned freehold tenements or the like, remained content with such possessions and passed their lives in retirement and tranquillity, while those of the military profession who were destitute of means took to agriculture to gain their subsistence.

The above particulars have reference to those Musalmans who came to Bengal previous to the country coming under the sway of the House of Timur. After the supremacy of the Mughals was established, their own people began to come to Bengal. Numbers of these people, of all descriptions and orders, came from time to time, into this country, in various ways and established themselves in all the parts, in a manner suitable

to their individual conditions. During the reigns of these monarchs most of the civil and military functionaries were of foreign origin, and the practice that previously obtained, of encouraging the settlement of the foreign Musalmans of noble and gentle birth, in this country, was also followed by the Mughal emperors, *i.e.*, they, too, caused the learned and the gentry to settle in various parts of the country by granting them *madadna-ash* and *jagirs* and treating them with regard and consideration.* They, moreover, observed

* *Akbarnamah*, Vol. II, tells of the Afghan invasions that were repeatedly made on the eastern countries (Bengal). When Solaman Shah, the then ruler of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, died and was succeeded by Daood Shah, Akbar the Great, Mogul Emperor, directed Monaim Khan, Khan Khanan, to invade Bengal in the 17th year after His Majesty's accession to the throne. In the 19th year Khan Khanan invaded Bengal, and the defeated King Daood Khan with his followers fled from Tanda (the capital of Bengal near Gorh) towards the south-east and north of Bengal (Hoogly, Dacca and Denajpore), Daood himself flying to Satgaun or Hoogly. In the 21st year Daood Shah was captured by Khan Jahan the then Subadar of Bengal, and put to death. The people tendered their submission to the Imperial Government of the Moguls, and thus peace and prosperity was established throughout the country—a country which was designated as the hot-bed of war from time immemorial on account of the confusion and disturbance which so violently agitated it.

In the 22nd year, the deceased King's mother with all her dependants made an appeal to the Emperor for protection and safety, and proposed to be permitted to appear personally before His Majesty when on tour in the neighbourhood of Tanda. Khan Jahan accepted her prayers and returned to his own station. In the 23rd year, Khan Jahan reported to His Majesty that the people of Bengal had agreed to obey the Imperial power; and finding therein the way to their prosperity and welfare, they gladly placed themselves under His Majesty's benignant protection and care; and Daood's mother with all her adherents and Mahmud Khan and many other insurgent Afghans came under the royal protection.

In the 28th year of His Majesty's reign (Vol. II, *Akbarnamah*) it is mentioned that when Bengal was invaded for the third time, wise and experienced men were employed to win the hearts of the people with sweet and

benignity and generosity in dealing with the Musal-
mans of the previous Governments, and confirmed
most of them in those grants-in-lands and stipends
which they formerly enjoyed. The Mughal Emperors
and Governors, like the former rulers of Bengal,
introduced into the country people of their own nation

attractive speeches, with persuasive eloquence and with hopeful assurances. By means of words which acted like enchantment, they succeeded in bringing the people to submit to the Emperor. Khaladin Khan first swore fealty to the imperial authority, and afterwards Mirza Beg, Jahazi Khan and many others proffered, through proxy, to submit to the Imperial Government. It was agreed that they would give up fighting and go to their homes, and then after some time they should appear before the Dārbar to make good their promise by doing good services. Mirza Beg, Khaladin Khan, Wazir Jamil and others presented themselves for the promised service as a proof of their declared submission. In the 29th year, when Shahbaz Khan was appointed Subadar of Bengal and Sadik Khan went from Bengal to the Emperor, Wazir Jamil, Khaladin Khan, Furrokh and others who had sworn allegiance, but on account of their previous misconduct had always lived in fear, accompanied Sadik Khan in the hope to obtain forgiveness through his intercession from His Majesty. As soon as the news reached His Majesty, Mahandas was sent to direct Sadik Khan to return to Bengal and join Wazir Khan then fighting with Katloo Khan in Orissa ; and to bring the refugees to the Court with hopes of imperial forgiveness. He met with Sadik Khan at Tanda, and sent him forthwith to join Wazir Khan as desired by His Majesty. Sadik sent his son Zahed to accompany the refugees to the Court and to afford consolation to them. In due time they reached the capital, and obtaining admission into the imperial presence, received His Majesty's forgiveness and were honoured with various gifts. It is put down again in the accounts of the same year (Vol. II, *Akbarnamah*) that Masoom Khan, one of the powerful grandees of Bengal, was advised to submit, and thereupon did so. Isa Khan, Zemindar of Sonargram, sent his men to Sadik Khan with hopes to obtain the royal forgiveness, and it was settled that Masoom Khan should be sent to Hejaz, and he himself should be a faithful servant to His Majesty and send one of his near relatives to the Court as a hostage, together with some choice presents and should return whatever he had wrung from the royal army during the battle. His Majesty accepted the aforesaid terms, and, accordingly, Isa Khan despatched to the capital the

and creed, and caused them to be domiciled and settled all over it, and thereby imparted security and stability to their rule.*

It was not the custom with the Musalman comers to return to their native lands after a sojourn in this country ; but, on the contrary, it was invariably their practice to permanently settle in any part of the country where they found a place which promised comfort and safety and where they could obtain means of livelihood.

There are no evidences on record which disprove the above facts and assertions, or which show that the natives of this country, either from compulsion or free will, were converted to Islam, in any appreciable number

elephants, the cannons and the treasures which he had captured. Though he did not send Masoom Khan to Hejaz he put a check upon his turbulent and mischievous tendencies. In the 30th year Shah Baz Khan, Subadar of Bengal, by means of loving and endearing words and assurances, won the hearts of the people and obtained their obedience, and thus he was very soon able to bring the refractory to obedience and submission, and thus peace and prosperity smiled in the land, and disorders and disturbances entirely left it.

Referring to the events that happened in the 37th year, the same authority states that the people of the eastern part of the country became thoroughly faithful and submissive and the province of Orissa was brought under subjection. The zemindars appealed for protection and safety, which was afforded to them, and the whole country made explicit submission. The sons of Katloo Khan, Khaja Soleman, Delawar Khan, Jelal Khan, Bahadur Ghor, Alif Khan, Abdul Gaffoor, Malaik Hybat, Malaik Daood, Malaik Sekandar, Habib Khan, Darya Khan, Shujadil and Mewa Khan, chieftains of Bengal, obtained His Majesty's protection.

* "This system of military service was perfectly congenial to the wishes of the Mughals ; and every chief, in succession, established himself and his dependant in the district, to which he had been first appointed ; and the late governor, Khan Jahan, being only solicitous about extirpating the Afghans, allowed them to continue in undisturbed possession."—*History of Bengal*, by C. Stewart, p. 107."

at a time, or that the descendants of the kings of Gaur or that those Musalmans whose arrival in this country is recorded in history or the descendants of such, ever quitted Bengal.

In giving an account of the Musalmans of Murshidabad, Sir W. W. Hunter, in his *Statistical Account of Murshidabad*, p. 60, makes an assumption in the following words : "It is said that the great Mahommedan families returned to Delhi or to Persia, when Bengal became subject to the English." Sir W. W. Hunter's remark on this point is as erroneous as untenable. It is an obvious fact that just before the conquest of Bengal by the English the Government of the land being in a state of disorganization, a strong and efficient government was most desirable. Therefore, when Bengal came under the British rule, which restored tranquillity to the country and gave protection to its people, the great Mahommedan families could hardly be so discontented as to retire to Delhi or to Persia ; while the spirit of toleration which is a characteristic of the English nation, not only afforded them liberty of faith and religion, but allowed them to be governed by their own laws and principles. The service of State, which causes its subjects to rise in position and wealth, attracted the great Mahommedan families to remain in Bengal, as, after the English became the rulers of the country, the Mahommedans, up to a recent time, used to hold posts of honor and trust and enjoyed a great share in the administration of the country. But the introduction of the English language into the country, and the prejudice of the Musalmans, which

they blindly formed against that language, and lastly the new system of distributing Government appointments, deprived them of their former position and posts, and ultimately brought them to their present depth of poverty and oblivion. One who has minutely studied the history of the Musalmans of Bengal, will see that the great Mahommedan families who came to Murshidabad from the time of Murshid Kuli Khan, the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, are still largely to be found in the towns of Murshidabad, Patna, Purnea, Dacca, Hoogly, &c., or in the villages of these districts; and that the *Sanads*, which were conferred upon them by the ancient rulers of the country, are still preserved and the landed property (though split into very small pieces) which they received as grants from those rulers, is, up to this day, in the possession of their descendants. It will thus appear that the supposition of Sir W. W. Hunter with regard to the Musalmans of Bengal is quite baseless and unreliable. Such being the case it can safely, and without any fear of contradiction, be asserted that the ancestors of the present Musalmans of this country were certainly those Musalmans who came here from foreign parts during the rule of the former sovereigns, and that the present generation of Musalmans are the offspring of that dominant race who remained masters of the land for 562 years. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the Musalmans of the present time are other than the descendants of those foreign Musalman rulers and settlers, who can then the progeny be of those foreign Musalmans and where have they gone to? Considering

that the descendants of only five Brahmins and five Sudras who (as is said) originally came to Bengal from Kanauj could have multiplied to such an enormous extent, that they are to be found everywhere in the country, what impossibility is there in supposing that the descendants of the innumerable and countless Musalmans who came to this country, during long ages, have become more numerous than they.

Having brought the argument to this advanced stage, we now trust that the reader will, with little deliberation, be able to perceive how far it could be just and right for any person to argue that "the ancestors of the Musalmans of Bengal were the low caste Hindus of this country who had embraced Islam."

The erroneous opinions expressed in this connection by Sir W. Hunter and other writers of note have been derived from the wrong and groundless theories promulgated by Mr. H. Beverley in the following statement in his Census Report of Bengal for 1872, [p. 132, para. 348]:—

"But probably the real explanation of the immense preponderance of the Musalman religious element in this portion of the delta is to be found in the conversion to Islam of the numerous low castes which occupied it. The Mahomedans were ever ready to make conquests with the Koran as with the sword. Under Sultan Jalal-ud-din, for instance, it is said that the Hindus were persecuted almost to extermination. The exclusive caste system of Hinduism, again, naturally encouraged the conversion of the lower orders from a religion under which they were no better than despised outcastes, to one which recognized all men as equals. It is not clear, indeed, that this conversion of the lower castes was more general in

the part of the country of which we are treating than elsewhere, though of course the greater number of Mahomedans located between Gaur and Ghoraghat adds probability to the supposition. History is unfortunately silent on this subject of conversion. But that conversion was very largely carried on in Bengal, appears not only probable, but is the only explanation of the large numbers of Mahomedans found here in the present day who occupy the same social position as their Hindu neighbours."

* * * *

Para. 352.—"In Bengal, however, it was not so. There the Musulman invasion found Hinduism resting on weak and uncertain foundations, with but a feeble hold over the minds and affections of the great bulk of the inhabitants. The Aryan element, so far from displacing the indigenous children of the soil, was only able to hold its own by frequent importations of fresh blood from Upper India. The Hindu religion itself was of a baser and more degraded type, being driven to assimilate and adopt the barbarous practices and superstitions of the aborigines which it sought to embrace within its folds. At the same time these huge masses found themselves occupying the position of serfs to a superior race who had overcome them by brute physical force, and in whose social system no place could be found for them. They were merely the hewers of wood and drawers of water for a set of masters in whose eyes they were unclean beasts and altogether abominable. Hemmed in by the sea, it was no longer open to them to retire further before the face of their pursuers, even had the Aryans ever entered Bengal in sufficient force to drive them to such an extreme measure. But when, in their turn, the Musalman conquerors of Hindustan invaded the lower delta with the sword and Koran, it may well be conceived that they were not altogether unwelcome. At any rate, they brought with them a religion and social system under which, instead of being a despised and outcaste race, the semi-amphibious aborigines of Bengal might occupy a rival, if not an equal, position to that of their late masters. We can imagine that very little

persecution was required to change the faith of these miserable helots of Bengal. Persecution has rarely, if ever, succeeded of its own innate force to establish any religion. The times and circumstances of the country must demand the revolution before it can be brought about by persecution alone. In Behar it was unsuccessful because Hinduism was strong enough to repel it. In Bengal Hinduism succumbed, and the great mass of the people embraced the faith of Mahammad simply to escape from their ignoble position under the Hindu system."

Para. 353.—"If further proof were wanted of the position that the Musalmans of the Bengal delta owe their origin to conversion rather than to the introduction of foreign blood, it seems to be afforded in the close resemblance between them and their fellow-countrymen who still form the low castes of Hindus. That both are originally of the same race seems sufficiently clear, not merely from their possessing identically the same physique, but from the similarity of the manners and customs which characterise them."

* * * *

Para. 354.—"But place a Chandal or a Rajbunsee and a Bengali Musalman together, and were it not for some peculiarity of dress or the mode of cutting the hair, it would be difficult to distinguish the one from the other. The probability is they are one and the same race, and only within the last few centuries have they ceased to profess the same religion."

We are surprised at the hypothesis of Mr. Beverley, which are, as he himself professes, quite unsupported by historical evidences. It is admitted on all hands that history is the only authentic record whereby we may become acquainted with the past events and occurrences of the world, and both greater and lesser events and significant and insignificant incidents are particularised therein. Wherefore, in the absence of all proof from the history of any nation whatever, in regard to the theories of Mr. Beverley, we are quite

unable to accept their accuracy. If it be maintained, for the sake of controversy, that the events of those times are not fully and comprehensively recorded in history, or that the mention of circumstances like these have been omitted either willfully or by oversight or from some other cause, our answer to this would be that there is no portion of the Musalman period of which the events are not fully and faithfully chronicled in their histories. When events far less important than those referred to by Mr. Beverley, such as the particulars of the reign of Sultan Mahmood, are fully narrated in the histories, what then could prevent the historians from recording such a comparatively noteworthy circumstance as the conversion of the Hindus of Bengal under the compulsion of their Musalman conquerors?

Had the facts asserted by Mr. Beverley been true, and the mention of them been omitted in the former histories, from any cause whatever, they would have surely been taken some notice of in those written at the command of the Emperor Akbar, such as the *Tabâquât-i-Akbâri* and the like, in which the accounts of the reigns of all the former sovereigns of Bengal are chronicled in minute detail. Akbar is universally considered to be a monarch free from all religious prejudice. Nevertheless, neither the historical works written under the direction of this emperor nor the annals of any other nation lend any support to the theories advanced by Mr. Beverley. He has stated that when the Musalmans invaded Lower Bengal with the sword and the *Koran* the lower orders of Hindus in this country were the objects of despite and contempt by the higher classes ;

that they were in a very degraded condition ; that they had no position in society, and that they “cut wood and drew water” for their masters ; and for these reasons were easily converted to Islam by the force of the sword and the *Koran*. But this statement is open to objection ; since if the lower orders of the Hindus were compelled to embrace Islam, how was it possible for the higher classes, who held a position of rivalry with the Musalmans, to have escaped from the rigours of compulsory proselytism and to have adhered to their own creed in this country ? Had the Musalman conquerors, holding the *Koran* in one hand and the sword in the other, forced the native people to submit to the yoke of Islam, then, as sure as the night follows the day, they would have converted to their own creed the higher orders of the Hindus equally with the lower classes.

I cite below the opinions of other Christian writers, which belie the assertions of Mr. Beverley as imputing wholesale proselytizing principles to the Musalman conquerors of Bengal, and also bring to light his lamentable errors and even the unfairness involved in such assertions. Thus the reader will perceive that it was commonly the practice with the Musalman conquerors everywhere to leave the people of any country they conquered to their own creed and custom, and not to interfere with their modes of life. The celebrated author, Mr. Godfrey Higgins, who is a great authority on the subject, writes as follows :—

* * * * *

“In the countries conquered by the Caliphs, the peaceable inhabitants, whether Greeks, Persians, Sabeans, or Hindoos,

were not put to the sword as the Christians have represented ; but after the conquest was terminated, were left in the peaceable possession of their properties and religion."

John Davenport has written, in his work entitled *Apology for Mahomed and the Koran*, that "the Musalman conquerors of India, after committing some acts hostile to the free exercise of other religions, left alone the temples of that civilized and prosperous country."

Another writer, in an article headed, "Islam as a Political System," which appeared in the *Journal East and West*, has stated :—

"Islam has never interfered with the dogmas of any faith, never persecuted, never established an Inquisition, never aimed at proselytism. It offered its religion, but never enforced it."

"A spirit the very reverse of this (intolerance)," remarks the same author, "is evinced in every page of the history of Islam, in every country to which it has extended ; so that in Palestine a Christian poet (Lamartine) has exclaimed twelve centuries after the events to which we are referring, 'The Mahometans are the only tolerant people on the face of the earth ;' and an English traveller (Slade) reproaches them with being too tolerant."

Let the reader remark well that all these impartial opinions of Christian judges are contradictory to the hollow assertions of Mr. Beverley.

It now remains to examine the question as to the low-caste Hindus of this country turning Musalmans from their having no place in respectable Hindu society, and owing to there being a general equality of position and absence of gradations among the Musalman community.

Every rational mind can well conceive that there is no earthly temptation, however strong, that can seduce one from the religion of his father and induce him to embrace any other religion. However mean and low a person's condition in life may be, he holds his faith dearer than all worldly lucre. If Mr. Beverley's conjectures were right, all the Hindus, high caste and low, would have equally forsaken their religion and embraced Islam, during the Musalman supremacy, in order to secure worldly advantages ; and thus of the followers of the Hindu faith who are countless in this country at the present day, scarcely any could be found ; or if some of them would have nevertheless remained in some remote and isolated part of the country, these remnants would surely have yielded to the evangelic persuasions of the missionaries, and would have been tempted to embrace Christianity for the sake of finding education and training in civilization and also the means of livelihood by the help of those missionaries, and furthermore to secure that equality of position which, from a religious point of view, is deemed to exist just as much among the Christian people as among the followers of Islam.

Mr. Beverley's opinion, that even a low-caste Hindu, on his conversion to Islam, attains to a position of equality with the generality of Musalmans, simply betrays his ignorance of the customs of the Musalmans. From a religious point of view, of course, all Musalmans stand on a footing of equality. But according to usage and customs the social position and the family rank of a man do not become altered by the change of religion. In fact the social position of a Musalman

convert exactly corresponds to the station he held previous to his conversion, and he can associate with only such Musalmans as belong to the same station as he himself; a low-caste person on his embracing Islam, is not allowed to hold familiar intercourse or claim equality with high-born Musalmans, nor can a Hindu of superior caste, upon his conversion to Islam, marry into a respectable Musalman family. Rigid and scrupulous regard has ever been paid by the Musalmans to social position and family dignity.

Regarding the features and physique, habits and characteristics of the Bengal Musalmans, Mr. Beverley has written that if one of these Musalmans be contrasted with a Chandala or Rajbansi, no difference can be perceived between them except in their dress and the cut of their hair. We shall show, in a subsequent chapter treating of the ethnological features and characteristics of the Musalmans, how far this statement is correct, but here we point out that the countenance and appearance of the Musalmans of Bengal remarkably differs from that of the Hindus of this country and is generally better than theirs.

Europeans have travelled through Arabia and Ajam under disguise, and have been taken by the natives of those countries either for Arabs or Ajams. For instance, in the accounts of the travels of the celebrated traveller, Sir Richard Burton, which were published, together with his portrait in Arabic costume, in the *Illustrated London News* of November 1st, 1890, it is related that he travelled through Africa and Arabia under the assumed name of Shaik Abdullah. He had

so successfully imitated the Arabic tongue and tone, and so effectually adapted his manners and habits, mien and air to those of the Arabs, that none of them suspected him of being an alien. Mr. Henry Palmer Arabic Professor of Cambridge University, stated that when he travelled in Arabia in Musalman guise, no one ever detected him. Very recently an Englishman went in disguise into Afghanistan and performed for five years the functions of Imam in the Cathedral Mosque of Herat; but no one could, during this long time, detect that he was a Christian and not a Musalman.

Thus when by a little imitation and temporary assumption of disguise, differences and distinctions can be so fully obliterated, it is no wonder then, if Mr. Beverley has failed to perceive any difference between the Hindus and Musalmans of this country whose families have lived in Bengal for centuries, and whose food, habits costume and dialect have undergone a material change.

Without having recourse to historical evidence and to the indications afforded by features and habits, mere conjecture is sufficient to lead us to the conclusion that it is owing to the country remaining under Musalman sway for nearly six hundred years that Musalmans are now to be found here in such overwhelming numbers. Likewise it would be more consistent with reason to think that the comparatively larger numbers of Musalmans that inhabit the district of Maldah, within which lie the ruins of Gaur and the adjacent districts, are the descendants of the population of that old Musalman capital. The Musalman capital in Bengal was first at Gaur. The capital was subsequently

removed to Rajmahal. From Rajmahal it was removed to Dacca, and from Dacca to Moorshidabad. A vast number of Musalmans will be found in all these districts and the surrounding ones. It also appears from this that probably all these Musalmans, or at least the major portion of them, are the descendants of the ruling races who successively governed these countries.*

* During the Mahommedan rule Ghor, Tanda, Rajmahal, Dacca and Murshidabad were respectively the capitals of Bengal, and this accounts for a larger number of Musalman population of these places as they settled in large numbers in the neighbourhood of their capitals,—Sarkar Ghoraghat, which now forms the districts of Bogra, Denajpore and Rungpore and its vicinity, Julpaigoory, etc. ; and Sarkar Satgaon, comprising 24-Parganas, Nadia and Hoogly ; Sarkar Fatehabad and Sarkar Bagla, which includes Jessore, Faridpur, Bakergunge and Dacca ; and Sarkar Sonargawn, now called Tipperah and Nawakhali¹ abound with Mahommedan population, the cause of which *Akharnamah* itself refers to the migration of a very large number of Mahommedans to the above-mentioned places.

Akharnamah, Vol. II, relates that when Monom Khan, Khan Khanan, conquered Bengal in the 19th year of His Majesty's reign, according to His Majesty's order, Daod Shah, King of Bengal, with his followers fled to Satgaun, and the chiefs and the grandees of Bengal with their adherents fled to Sonargram, Ghoraghat and Fatehabad. Thus each party left the capital and fled in different directions (for safety). Khan Khanan, conjointly with Raja Todarmal, took possession of Tanda, the then capital of Bengal, and began to administer the country and sent the victorious army away into the neighbourhood in different directions all over Bengal. Mahommed Kooli Khan and others were sent to Satgan, Majno Khan and others to Ghoraghat, to suppress the insurrection and disturbances that were raging there, and Morad Khan and others to Fatehabad and Bogla to establish peace and order there ; and Itemad Khan with others was appointed to subdue Sonargawn and to suppress the disturbances and disorders that might be prevailing there. This war between the Imperial army and the armies of the Chiefs of Bengal

¹ Dr. Blochmann's contribution to the *History of Bengal*.

We cannot say whether Mr. Beverley has any ulterior object in exposing the Musalmans to contempt and ridicule by publishing such unjust opinions and

continued for a few years. At last, however, the people of Bengal sought for protection and swore allegiance. Their prayers were granted and protection was given to them. It was ordered that they should establish themselves where they were and that *jagirs* for their maintenance should be settled on them. On account of the residence of these protected chiefs, the districts of Bogra, Pabna-Denajpore, Jalpaigooey, Rangpore, Bakergunge, Maimansingh, Dacca, Tipperah, Noakahli, Chatgaon, Twenty-four Parganas, Hoogly, Nadia, Farripore and Jessore abound with a Mahommedan population. The reason why Maldah and its adjacent (countries), Rajshahi, Purnea, Rajmahal, and their neighbouring places and Murshidabad teem with a Mahommedan population is this: that these places formed respectively the capitals of the Mahommedan kings and Nazims of Bengal. It appears from the verdict and testimony of history that the Mahommedans of Assam are not the descendants of the native converts of the place. Although they resemble the native Assamese to a considerable extent in appearance, language, manners and customs, they are not the original inhabitants of Assam. (See *History of Assam*, written by a follower of Mir Jumla, Subadar of Bengal, when the latter invaded and conquered Assam under the Imperial order from Aurangzeb). It is stated in page 34 of the said History that Hussain Shah, King of Bengal, marched towards Assam with twenty thousand horse and foot and innumerable boats. The King of Assam left his dominion and fled towards the mountainous regions of the land. Hussain Shah left his son with most of his army to rule over the country. When the rainy season advanced and the ways of communication were overflowed and stopped, the Raja descended from the mountains, and, in collusion with his people who had sworn allegiance to the victorious party, imprisoned the Prince with his chiefs and followers. The present Mahommedans of Assam, it is alleged, belong to the descendants of these captives from among Hussain Shah's armies. The author adds that it is through intermarriages between these captives and the Assamese that their children adopted the manners and customs of the natives, and are Mahommedan only in name. They like to befriend the natives more than the Mahommedans, and are more inclined to the Assamese than to the followers of Islam. And the Mahommedans who migrated and settled in Assam were allowed to say their *namaz* (prayers) and perform their *roza* (fast) but not to cry their sacred *azan*, nor to chant the Holy Koran.

lamentable conjecture and imaginary suspicions as he has done ; but what we believe is that finding the Musalmans in overwhelming numbers in Bengal, and being ignorant of the actual cause of this increase in their numbers, he has advanced whatever theories he pleased to account for it.

We lament that during the *régimé* of the most just and popular Government of Britain, a Government which has not its equal in the universe, the feelings of such vast multitudes of its loyal Musalman subjects should be allowed to be hurt by their being unjustly held up to ridicule before the whole world, and, moreover, that such whimsical and defamatory statements which scandalize these Musalmans and injure their feelings should be placed on public record to put them to shame and make them contemptible in the eyes of the world.

We humbly but most earnestly implore the paternal Government to repair the wrong done to us Musalman subjects through the public writings of Mr. Beverley ; and solicit that the question at issue, *viz.*, that of our origin and ancestry be thoroughly inquired into with the help of the light afforded by history and that the results of such investigation may be placed on record.

CHAPTER II.

TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHIEF MUSALMAN FAMILIES IN BENGAL.

ANOTHER proof of the existence of noble and high Musalman families in Bengal is that during the supremacy of the Ghorî, Khiljî, Mughal and other Musalman dynasties in India, the practice was that high and responsible officers and persons of distinction were granted *Jagirs*, *Al-tamgha*, *Aima* and *Madadi-ma'âsh* by the State, in lieu of the payment of their salaries and stipends in cash. As a rule, *Jagirs* and *Al-tamgha* used to be granted to civil and military officers, and *Aimas* and *Madadi-ma'âsh* to learned men, spiritual leaders, and persons of noble descent. *Jagirs* were granted nominally for life, but as most of the State appointments were conferred on the heirs of the late incumbents, consequently the *Jagirs* became hereditary in the family. *Aimas* and *Madadi-ma'âsh* were granted in perpetuity chiefly to persons of noble birth and to holy men. Besides these grants, rent-free tenements used to be assigned by Government for the maintenance of holy shrines, mosques, and other religious establishments.

It should be here noted that in those times much circumspection was exercised and strictness observed in

regard to land being granted free of rent ; as from very early ages it has been the prerogative of royalty to possess certain proprietary rights in the lands within the kingdom, and the former sovereigns depended for their personal expenses as well as for those of the administration exclusively upon the revenues derived from these lands. For this reason, such grants of land as deprived the Crown of its proprietary rights were never made except under actual and special requirements ; and consequently these grants were made by Government only in cases of absolute necessity to persons of great distinction, of admitted holiness and for the maintenance of shrines. The rules and practices related in the *Ain-i-Akbari* regarding *Sayúrgháls* are given below in a condensed form.

The kind-hearted Emperor (Akbar), by the wisdom given to him by God, reserved the grants of subsistence allowances and *Madadi-ma'úsh* for four kinds of men, *viz.* :—

“(1) Those persons who have devoted themselves to the service of God and have withdrawn from all worldly concerns, and are engaged, day and night, in the search after true knowledge.

“(2) Those men of pious resignation who, overcoming vicious tendencies of human nature, have turned their faces from society.

“(3) Men who are destitute of means and incapable of making shift for themselves.

“(4) Men of respectability and good birth who, having improvidently and imprudently learnt no profession, are unable to provide for themselves.”

Subsistence allowances paid in cash are termed *Ozeefa*, and the grants in land are called *Madadi-ma'úsh*.

In these two forms, millions have already been given away by the Imperial Government.

The *Sayúrgháls* of the Afghans were separated from the *Khalasa* or Crown lands, and orders were issued to the effect that all those who possessed five hundred bighas or more should relinquish their hold upon those lands, unless their titles were reviewed and ratified by the Emperor in person.

Another order was passed that the excess of all lands beyond one hundred bigahs, if left unspecified in the *Farman*s, should be reduced to its two-fifths and the difference of three-fifths should be resumed and converted to Crown land, the Eranian and Toorian widows alone being exempted from the operation of this regulation.

It was further ruled that such of the *Jagir* holders as might be found to occupy lands other than those constituting their *Jagirs*, may each of them be granted out of these new lands such a portion as to be equivalent to three-fourths of his relinquished *Jagir*.

During the ministry of Azd-ud-Dawlah, it was ordained that if a *Sayúrghál* was held by more than one person and had not been divided and partitioned according to the terms of the *Farman*, the *Sadar* should, of his own motion, in the event of the death of any of the partners, proceed to make a proper division of the *Sayúrghál*, and keep the share of the deceased partner annexed to the Crown land until the appearance of rightful heirs. The *Sadar* was, moreover, vested with the power to grant releases for holdings up to fifteen bighas.

Again, when it transpired that holders of one hundred bighas or less were guilty of dishonesty, orders were given for the *Sadar* to produce these grantees in person before the royal presence. Further orders were afterwards passed that the *Sadar* should, with the concurrence of Abul Fazl, either increase or retrench these grants.

The general rule was that *Sayúrgháls* should consist of one-half of tilled and the other half of cultivable lands, but if otherwise, one-fourth of the whole might be retrenched and a cash allowance made in lieu of the remainder. The rate of revenue per bigha varies in the different parts but is never less than a rupee.*

The following statement will show the varieties and descriptions of *Lakhiraj* or rent-free tenures, held by the gentry and nobility, in most of the districts of Bengal, as originally under such rules and restrictions as have been mentioned above.

DESCRIPTIONS OF LAKHIRAJ TENURES.

Varieties of Lakhiraj Tenures.	Particulars of Holders.	Nature of the Tenures.
Jagir ...	Musalmans and Hindus.	Used to be granted for the life term of the holder for bearing any office or as remuneration for service.
Al-tamgha ...	Ditto ...	Granted in perpetuity.
Madadi-ma'ásh ...	Musalmans ...	Granted exclusively to spiritual guides, Syyads and high-born Musalmans.
Aima ...	Ditto ...	For religious leaders, spiritual guides and Syyads.

* Note on the Cadrs of Akbar's reign.

Description of Lakhiraj Tenures.—continued.

Varieties of Lakhi-raj Tenures.	Particulars of Holders.	Nature of the Tenures.
Maskan ...	Musalmaus ...	For the erection of habitations, &c.
Nazoorat ...	Ditto ...	Granted to spiritual guides, Syyads and venerable holy men.
Khankah ...	Ditto ...	For the erection of Khankah.
Fakiran ...	Ditto ...	For mendicants.
Nazri Dargah ...	Ditto ...	For the maintenance of a shrine.
Nazri-Imamain or Tazia-dari.	Ditto ...	For the celebration of the Moharram.
Zamin-i-Masjid ...	Ditto ...	For the current expenses of a mosque.
Nazri Hazrat ...	Ditto ...	For the performance of certain oblations.
Kharchi Mosaflan	Ditto ...	For hospitality to wayfarers.
Marummati Masjid, &c.	Ditto ...	For the maintenance of a mosque, &c.
Ma-A'fi ...	Ditto ...	For the subsistence of nobly-born Musalmans.
Piran ...	Ditto ...	For spiritual guides and learned men, &c.
Khyrat or Khyrati	Ditto ...	For Musalmans in destitute circumstances.
Kharij Jama ...	Hindus and Musalmans.	This tenure pertains both to Hindus and Musalmans.
Minhai ...	Ditto ...	Ditto.
Brahmatter ...	Hindus ...	Specially for Brahmans.
Mehtran ...	Ditto ...	For Hindus other than Brahmans.
Maleck and Maleakana.	Musalmans and Hindus.	Pertains both to Hindus and Musalmans.
Debatter ...	Ditto ...	For the maintenance of Hindu shrines.
Shewatter ...	Ditto ...	Ditto.
Sooraj Parbat ...	Hindus ...	For the maintenance of Hindu shrines.
Inam ...	Musalmans and Hindus.	Given as a reward for service both to Hindus and Musalmans.
Munkar ...	Ditto ...	Ditto.

Besides the varieties detailed in the above statement, there are many other kinds of *Lakhiraj* in Bengal, which are known by different names in different districts. But of the whole nomenclature, the terms *Al-tamgha Aima*, *Madadi-ma'ásh* and *Jagir* signify royal grants.

Aima tenures are peculiar to Bengal, and are nowhere else to be found; thus indicating that they form the grants exclusively made by the Kings of Gaur.

The verbal meaning of the term *Aima* is subsistence or maintenance, but technically it signifies a *Jagir* granted by the king, to an especially deserving and venerable person. Grants bearing this designation pertain exclusively to the *Syyads*, holy men, venerable persons, and the leaders of the Musalman religion. Or, speaking more generally, lands granted by the Kings of Bengal to the religious and spiritual leaders of the Musalmans were termed *Aimas*. Of *Aimas*, again, there are two subdivisions,—one is free from assessment, and the other is very lightly assessed. Both the kinds, however, form royal grants. A very small remnant of the rent-free *Aimas* now exist, for most of these were resumed during the *régimé* of the Mughal dynasty and then resettled for low rates with their former owners. The difference between *Lakhiraj* or rent-free tenures granted by the Kings of Gaur and those granted by the Mughal Emperors is merely nominal, freehold tenements bestowed by the Kings of Gaur on holy persons, learned men and religious guides, were designated *Aimas*; while similar grants made by the Mughal Emperors were termed *Madadi-ma'ásh*. *Aima* tenures are chiefly to be found in those

districts in which the ancient noble Musalman families of Gaur lived. There are twenty-five such districts in Bengal, namely :—

(1) Murshidabad.	(14) Bogra.
(2) Nuddea.	(15) Pabna.
(3) 24-Perganahs.	(16) Darjeeling.
(4) Khoolna.	(17) Jalpaiguri.
(5) Jessore.	(18) Dacca.
(6) Burdwan.	(19) Faridpore.
(7) Hughly.	(20) Bakarganj.
(8) Midnapore.	(21) Mymensingh.
(9) Birbhoom.	(22) Chittagong.
(10) Bankoorah.	(23) Noakholly.
(11) Deenajpore.	(24) Tipperah.
(12) Rajshahi.	(25) Maldah.
(13) Rangpore.	

Again, there are 700 lots of *Aimas* in the district of Murshidabad; in Rajshahi, Bagha and Nattore there are large numbers of *Aima* lots; in Bogra there are 694 lots; in Burdwan 1,705 lots; in Hughly 894 lots; in Bakarganj the number is somewhat smaller, but has not been ascertained precisely; in Midnapore there are 12 lots; in 24-Perganahs 16 lots; and in Maldah, Deenajpore, Noakholly there are some lots also, but their exact number has not been learnt. It is evident from the above accounts that there are the largest numbers of *Aima* lots in the districts of Murshidabad, Burdwan, Hughly, Maldah, Rajshahi and Bogra, namely, the districts adjoining Gaur. But even in these districts *Aimas* lie chiefly in such parts as are elevated and free from damp, and where the soil is hard and compact, but rarely in such places as are marshy or sandy or subject to river floods. Again, with regard to the three ancient

divisions of Bengal, namely, Rarh, Barind and Bang, *Aimas* are to be found mostly in Rarh, less in Barind and rarely in Bang.

After the conquest of Bengal by Akbar, when the land-settlement of the country was made by Rajah Todar Mull, most of the *Aimas* were, under the rules of *Sayirghál*, converted to domain lands; and, subsequently, during the administrations of the Nazims, Murshid Kuli Khan and Nawab Kasim Ali Khan, *Aima* lands were again resumed and then permanently settled for low rents with their former possessors. Henceforth these lightly assessed tenements came to be called *Aimas*. The general rate of Government revenue for *Aima* lands is three bighas per rupee.

Sir W. Hunter has written in his *Statistical Account of Murshidabad* that the real difference between a cessed *Aima* and *Lakhiraj* is very slight. *Aimas* were granted exclusively to the Musalmans, and although revenue has been levied upon them, yet the rates fixed are very low and nominal. The same author has written in his account of Rajshahi that in this district there are *Aimas* in Nattore and Bagha. All these were granted by the former rulers chiefly to the learned men of the Musalmans and to their holy men, spiritual guides, and religious leaders, and for charitable purposes; these grants date from times far remote from the *dewani* administration; and the proprietary rights vested by the grants are both hereditary and transferable.

Besides the *Aimas*, *Madadi-ma'ásh* and other varieties of *Lakhiraj* tenures, as detailed in the foregoing statement, are very numerous in Bengal; and although their

exact amount is not known, yet from the statistical accounts it is very clear that it is very large.

When the government of these provinces fell under the sovereign control of the British nation, then, according to Regulation XIX of 1793 of this Government, all *Lakhiraj* tenements exceeding ten bighas, with regard to which the occupiers failed to produce royal *Sanads* were resumed. Under the operation of this Regulation many *bonâ fide* grants, for which the *Sanads* were not forthcoming, were converted to domain lands.

Afterwards Regulation XXXVII of 1793 was passed for the resumption of life-term and other kinds of *Lakhiraj* tenures, other than those forming royal grants, and also such as might be dated earlier than 1765 A.D., of which the occupiers might be in possession of *Sanads*, and of which they should have acquired the possession by fair means before the above-mentioned year, and which had not been previously assessed by the British authorities for more than its usual revenue.

Finally, Regulation II of 1819 A.D., for the resumption of *Lakhiraj* lands, gave the death-blow to these tenures. It was laid down in section 28 of this Regulation that no *Farman* of the Emperors of Delhi, nor any *Sanad*, or *Parwana* of any Wazir, Nawab, or Rajah, shall be considered valid ground for title, unless such documents can be verified from official records and their genuineness attested to by living witnesses, and that they shall not be accepted as valid merely because of other attestations which they may contain.

Under the operations of the Regulations noticed above, more especially those of the last-mentioned,

most of the *Lakhiraj* tenements underwent resumption ; and it is surprising, indeed, that in spite of these sweeping legislative measures, such numerous Musalman *Lakhiraj* tenures should still continue to exist in these provinces.

But let us pause here to ask those who are opposed to our views, whether all these countless *Lakhiraj* tenures (which by their very nature pertain exclusively to the Musalmans) are not standing memorials of equally countless, high, and noble Musalman families in this country, belonging to by-gone generations ? We maintain that no one can affirm the contrary. Let us further ask whether it is possible that the lines of descent of all those countless families could have become extinct ? and if not, where are their descendants, if not in Bengal ; and who are they, if not the present generation of the Musalmans of this country ? We are afraid that any candid reply given to the above questions would but confute the declared opinion of those who oppose our views.

Let it be remembered that those *Lakhiraj* and *Aima* tenures which were peculiar to the Musalmans are not all at present in their possession. The fact is that, on the one hand, ruin having overtaken the ancient Musalman families, and, on the other hand, the auction rules of Government being in active operation, these tenures have become alienated from their original owners either by public auction by Government or by private sales by themselves, and gradually men of different nations and creeds have acquired possession of the estates of the Musalmans.

Another proof of the same kind is that most of the *perganahs*, villages, and hamlets in this country bear Musalman names ; thus denoting clearly that their *Ta-ahhuddars* and owners were at one time Musalmans. Formerly it was the custom for landed estates and *Ilakas* to be called after the names of their owners and also to be entered under the same names in the Government registers. For instance, *Perganah-i Barbakabad*, *Perganah-i Zafaru Jal*, *Perganah-i Jawar Ibrahim*, *Perganah-i Barbak*, *Perganah-i Solaman Shahi*, *Haveli Sherpore*, *Azmat Shahi Perganah*, *Hosain Ujl* and numerous other such names are borne by *perganahs* and villages in this country. This sort of nomenclature sufficiently shows that all such estates originally belonged to the Musalmans, and as these appellations bear strong resemblance to the names of the *Khilji* and *Ghori Amirs*, the presumption is strong that the owners of these estates were the Amirs and nobles of those times. It was evidently owing to the residence of these landlords and *Ilakadars* on their estates that the location of high Musalman families in the rural parts received an impetus. Another reason for gentle and noble families preferring to reside in the country was that the rural population were less subject than the urban population to the dangers and disasters that usually attend revolutions and violent changes of Government.* It is the result of these causes combined

* The Government of the Afghans in Bengal cannot be said to have been monarchical, but nearly resembled the feudal system introduced by the Goths and Vandals into Europe. Bukhtyar Khilji and the succeeding conquerors made choice of a certain district as their own domain : the other districts were assigned to the inferior chiefs, who subdivided the

that high and low born Musalmans at present form so large a section of the rural population of this country.

Traces that still exist in almost every village and hamlet of tombs, sepulchres, monasteries, shrines and mosques, endowed with thousands of *bighas* of *Lakhiraj* lands, of which an insignificant portion only alone survives for its legitimate purpose, indicate the existence, at some remote period, of illustrious and saintly Musalmans in those places.

Note.

* During the times of the Musalman rulers the land of Bengal was divided into two descriptions : one was the "Crown lands," the revenues of which were administered by the Government, and which were denominated the "*Khalasa* lands;" and the other kind of lands belonged to the nobles and patricians as constituting their *Jagirs*. The income proceeding from *Khalasa* lands during Akbar's time amounted to Rs. 63,03,752, and* that proceeding from *Jagir* amounted to 43 lakhs. (See Parliamentary V. Report.)

lands amongst their petty commanders, each of whom maintained a certain number of soldiers, composed principally of their relations or dependants; these persons, however, did not cultivate the soil themselves, but each officer was the landlord of a small estate, having under him a certain number of Hindu tenants, to whom, from the principle of self-interest, he conducted himself with justice and moderation; and had it not been for the frequent change of masters, and constant scenes of rebellion and invasion, in which private property was little regarded, the cultivators of the soil would have been placed in a state of comparative happiness; and agriculture would have flourished, as it subsequently did in another part of India, under the Government of their countrymen, the Rohillas.

The condition of the upper classes of Hindus must, doubtless, have been much deteriorated, but it is probable that many of the Afghan officers, averse to business, or frequently called away from their homes to attend their chiefs, farmed out their estates to the opulent Hindus, who were also permitted to retain the advantages of manufactures and commerce.

* See, *Ain-i-Akbari*.

The Khalasa lands.—*Aumils* were appointed by Government for the administration of the revenues of these lands, and the persons employed under them for the realization and collection of the revenues were called Zemindars. These latter functionaries used to collect the revenues from the ryots and ultimately to remit them to the Government Treasury, for which they were paid by commission at a certain fixed percentage. In Bengal these Zemindars were mostly Hindus of the Kayestha caste. The Zemindars, in fact, possessed no particular right in the lands; on the contrary, they were like all other State servants; but as in those times most of the Government posts were hereditary, so these appointments also were allowed by Government to descend from father to the son. But in reality the dismissal and appointment of the Zemindars were absolutely in the power of the sovereign ruler of the time. These appointments were vacated and filled up according to the pleasure of Government, on the incumbents being found guilty of faults and delinquencies. In those times great responsibilities rested with the Zemindars, such as the collection of the revenues, the remittance of the realizations and rendering proper accounts for the same, and the like other functions. Any delinquency taking place in the realization and remittance of the revenues was visited by heavy punishment on the Zemindars, and they had, on that account, to suffer various hardships and, besides, imprisonment, even bodily torture was one of the punishments laid down for such delinquents. The Zemindars, moreover, had to answer for robbery, dacoity, murder and other serious offences taking place within the area under their control.

One reason for men of the Kayestha caste being mostly appointed as Zemindars was that these men understood agricultural and revenue matters better than other people; and the other reason was that the severities that accompanied the demands of Government in those times, and the serious responsibilities that then lay on the shoulder of the Zemindars, served as deterrents for men of higher classes than the Kayestha taking up the appointment who, as far as possible, kept themselves free from the responsibilities pertaining to that post.

In fact, this profession was invested with so much terror, that even in the early *régimé* of the British Government and after the Permanent Settlement had taken place, cautious men, at the outset, hesitated to take zemindaries, and if they were tempted to have them for the sake of gain, they took them under fictitious names. Under these circumstances the Zemindari profession in this country remained almost restricted to the Kayestha caste* during the times of the Musalman rulers, and the above practices continued more or less in force throughout this period.

When the British Government commenced, the East India Company vested the Zemindars with hereditary permanent rights in 1793 A.D. Henceforth the Zemindars began to have proprietary rights in the lands. As the income derived from the land kept increasing under the British Government, the condition of the Zemindars consequently became the more improved and prosperous.

The other kind, or the Jagir lands.—Under this head I shall deal with *mansabi* and non-*mansabi Jagirs*, and *Aima*, *Madadi-ma'ûsh* and all other kinds of rent-free lands. These lands belonged to the nobility and gentry of the country. High officers of Government, the *Mansabdars*, men of renown and fame or of noble descent, and spiritual leaders had the grants of *Jagirs*, *Aimas* and *Madadi-ma'ûsh*. This class of men were esteemed as the flower of the people. The personal expenses of the officers and those of the requirements of their appointments had to be met out of the revenues of their respective estates. They had to perform the service required of them to their king and the country. Each *Mansabdar* had to maintain a militia force in proportion to the extent of the resources of his *Jagir*, wherewith to serve the Government in time of war. They administered their respective estates on their own account, but they also entrusted the work of the collection of the revenues of their domains to the men of Kayestha caste, who in this capacity also bore the title of Zemindar. The term

* See, *Ain-i-Akbari*.

Zemindar then signified a person who, on receipt of a commission, collected the land revenues on behalf of the owner, and paid the same to him.

The *Jagirs* held by the nobility and the gentry were of two kinds: one of which was hereditary and permanent, and the other was non-hereditary and temporary. The former kind of *Jagirs* was held by eminent ecclesiastics, i.e., those who had the dignity of being the religious leaders of the people, and by men of noble descent. It was not in the power of the sovereign to dispossess these *Jagirdars* of their estates; on the contrary, the sovereign had to follow them in matters social, religious and political.

Although the *Jagirs* of the officers and *Mansabdars* were, strictly speaking, of a temporary nature, yet as most of the appointments were, in those times, hereditary, and retained in the family, consequently these *Jagirs* ought rather to be considered as hereditary. The descent of such a *Jagir* in a family was only interrupted in the event of the person holding it, for the time being, by virtue of his office, being dismissed the service. In such a case the *Jagir* thus resumed was invariably bestowed on the person who was appointed to the vacant post. So long as Bengal continued to be governed by its independent rulers, such ejections from, and allotments of, *Jagirs* seldom took place, except when there was a revolution of Government and the transfer of the sceptre from one dynasty to another. But whenever the country became subjugated by any foreign power, then of course great changes took place in the former state of things. For instance, when Bengal lost its independence and came under the Government of the Mughal Emperors, the *Mansabi Jagirs* passed from the possession of the ancient noble families of the country and came into the hands of the foreign Mughal nobles. But even then moderation and forbearance were shown towards persons of high origin and religious leaders, inasmuch as either some portion of their *Jagirs* were allowed to remain in their possession, or after the resumption of the entire *Jagirs*, some fresh grants were made to them. The Mughal Emperors,

moreover, granted numerous *madad-i-ma-aish* (a kind of free-hold tenure) to the patricians and ecclesiastics of their own times ; but resumptions and bestowals of, and additions and alterations in, the *jagirs* ever continued to take place during the period of the Mughal domination.

Subsequently when the country came under the British administration, all the officers of the previous Government and the *mansabdars* lost their appointments, and all the *jagirs*, *mansabi* and non-*mansabi* were resumed by the governing power, and some of the ejected *jagirdars* were assigned stipends in lieu ; and instead of the dismissed officers and *mansabdars*, European officers were appointed on salaries payable in cash. But at this time also the British authorities allowed the patrician and ecclesiastical *jagirs* to remain as they were, and enacted laws and regulations to this purpose. Nevertheless, owing to the severities of the laws and from other causes, a great many free-hold tenures and estates came ultimately to be resumed by Government.

The lands of the *mansabi* and other kinds of *jagirs* that were resumed from time to time were settled with the zemindars for revenues, in a similar manner as were the *khalsa* lands. In fine, the original owners of the lands, who held them free of rent, and who were the principal men of the country, have now disappeared altogether, and in their stead Government revenue agents or zemindars became proprietors of the lands, by virtue of the "Permanent Settlement." This radical change took place at the dawn of the British *regime*, and indeed it is the British Government that has converted the zemindars into landlords, for they had no such conspicuous position before, as they now occupy, for then the *mansabdars* and other *jagirdars* formed the leading men of the country.

Mr. John Grant writes that two-fifths of the lands of Bengal belonged to the nobles and patricians, and the remaining three-fifths to the reigning monarch. From this, it can be conceived what a large number of dignified persons and *jagirdars* and *mansabdars* lived in this country. Although these *jagirdars* have now disappeared, and their posts have been abolished and

their *jagirs* resumed, their foot-prints still exist, and their descendants still live in this country among us.

It would not be without interest to the readers, we presume, if we mention here something relative to the nature of the *mansab* and the holders of such stations, as it would therefrom appear in what number these Musalman noblemen were in the empire, and what sort of men these grandees were. For the information of our readers, we give below in a condensed form the Regulation in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, together with the valuable note of Dr. Blochmann thereon.

Notes on the *Cadrs* of Akbar's reign by Professor Blochmann :—

"In this *Ain*—one of the most interesting in the whole work, the Chaghtái word *Sayúrghál* is translated by the Arabic *Mudad-ul-ma'úsh*, in Persian *Madad-i-ma'úsh*, for which we often find in MSS. *Madad-o-ma'úsh*. The latter term signifies 'assistance of livelihood,' and, like its *equivalent* (*milk*), or property, it denotes lands given for benevolent purposes, as specified by Abul Fazl. Such lands were hereditary, and differ for this reason from *jagir* or *tuzul* lands, which were conferred, for a specified time, on Mansabdárs in lieu of *salaries*.

This *Ain* proves that Akbar considerably interfered with *Sayúrghál* lands arbitrarily, resuming whatever lands he liked, and increasing the domain, or *khálasah* lands to the ruin of many a Mahommedan (Afghan) family. He also completely broke the power of the *Cadr* whose dignity, especially before the Mughal dynasty, had been very great. It was the *Cadr*, or as he was then generally styled, *Cadr-i-Jahan*, whose edict legalized the *jálus* or accession of a new king. During the reign of Akbar also, he ranked as the fourth officer of the empire (*vide* end of *Ain* 30). The power of these *Cadrs* was immense. They were the highest law-officers, and had the powers which Administrators-General have among us ; they were in charge of all lands devoted to ecclesiastical and benevolent purposes, and possessed an almost unlimited authority of conferring such lands independently of the king. They were also the highest ecclesiastical law-officers, and might

exercise the powers of High Inquisitors. Thus Abdul Nabi, during his *Cadrship*, ordered two men to be killed for heresy (*vide* p. 177).

In the times before the Mughals, the terms *idrārāt*, *wazāif*, *milk*, *in'ām-i-dehka*, *in'ām-i-zaminha*, &c., occur for the word *Sayūrgkāl* (or *Seyūrgkhāl*, or *Sughūrgkhāl*, as some dictionaries spell it).

Among the former kings, Ala-ud-din Khilji is notorious for the disregard with which he cancelled the grants of former rulers. He resumed the greater part of the *Madad-i-ma'āsh* tenures, and made them domain lands. He also lowered the dignity of the *Cadr* by appointing his key-bearer to this high office (*Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 353). Qutb-ud-din Mubarik Shah, however, during the four years and four months of his reign, reinstated many whom Ala-ud-din had deprived (*T. F.*, p. 358).

That Shere Shah has often been accused by Mughal historians for his bounty in conferring lands, has been mentioned above (*Ferishta*, p. 256 note); and this may have been one of the reasons why Akbar shewed such an unexpected severity towards the grant-holders of his time.

Each *culah* had a *Cadr-i-Juz*, or provincial *Cadr*, who was under the orders of the Chief *Cadr* (*Cadr-i-Jahan*, or *Cadr-i-Kul*, or *Cadr-i-Cudur*).

Just as in every other department, bribery was also extensively carried on in the offices of the *Cadrs*. The land specified in the *farman* of a holder rarely corresponded in extent with the land which he actually held; or the language of the *farman* was ambiguously worded, to enable the holder to take possession of as much as he could, and keep it as long as he bribed the *Kazis* and Provincial *Cadrs*. Hence Akbar had every reason, after repeated inquiries, to cancel grants conferred by former rulers. The religious views of the Emperor (*vide Ferishta*, p. 167), and the hatred which he shewed to the '*Ulamā*', most of whom held lands, furnished him with a personal, and therefore stronger, reason to resume their grants, and drive them away to Bhakkar in Sind, or to Bengal, the climate of which, in those days, was as notorious as in later days, that of Gombroon.

After the fall of Abdul Nabi—a man whom Akbar used once to honour by adjusting his slippers—Sultan Khwájah, a member of the Divine Faith (vide *Ferishta*, p. 204), was appointed as *Cadr*; and the *Cadrs* after him were so limited in the power of conferring lands independently of Akbar and had so few grants to look after, as to tempt Badaoni to indulge in sarcastical remarks. The following were Akbar's *Cadrs* :—

1. Shaikh Gadái, a Shiah, appointed at the recommendation of Bairam Khan, till 968.
2. Khwaja Muhammad Calish, till 971.
3. Shaikh Abdul Nabi, till 986.
4. Sultan Khwájah, till his death in 993.
5. Amír Fathullah of Shíráz, till 997.
6. *Cadr* Jáhán, whose name coincides with the title of his office.

Abul Fazl also mentions a *Cadr*, Maulana Abdul Baqi; but I do not know when he held office.

I extract a few short passages from Badaoni :—

Page 29. Shaikh Gadái cancelled the *Madad-i-ma'ásh* lands, and took away the legacies of the Khanzadas (Afghans) and gave a *Sayúrghál* to any one that would bear up with humiliating treatment, but not otherwise. Nevertheless, in comparison with the present time, when obstacles are raised to the possession of every *jarib* of ground, nay, even less, you may call the Shaikh an *A'lambaksh* (one who gives away a world).

Page 52. After Shaikh Gadái, Khwaja Muhammad Calish was, in 968, appointed *Cadr*; but he did not possess such extensive powers in conferring lands as *Madad-i-ma'ásh*, because he was dependent on the Diwáns.

Page 71. In 972, or perhaps more correctly in 971, Shaikh Abdul Nabi was made *Cadr*. In giving away lands, he was to consult Muzaffar Khán, at that time Vazir and Vakíl. But soon after the Shaikh acquired such absolute powers, that he conferred on deserving people whole worlds of subsistence-allowances, lands and pensions, so much so that if you place the grants of all former kings of Hindústán in one scale, and those of the Shaikh into the other, his scale would weigh more.

But several years later the scale went up, as it had been under former kings, and matters took an adverse turn.

Page 204. In 983, His Majesty gave the order that the *aimas* of the whole empire should not be let off by the *Kroris* of each *pergunnah* unless they brought the *farmans* in which their grants, subsistence-allowances, and pensions were described to the *Cadr* for inspection and verification. For this reason, a large number of worthy people, from the eastern districts up to the *Bhakkar* on the *Indus*, came to court. If any of them had a powerful protector in one of the *grandees* or near friends of His Majesty, he could manage to have his affair settled; but those who were destitute of such recommendations, had to bribe Sayyid 'Abdurrasûl, the Shaikh's headman, or make presents to his *farrâshes*, *darbans* (porters), *syces* (grooms), and *methers* (sweepers), 'in order to get their blanket out of the mire.' Unless, however, they had either strong recommendations, or had recourse to bribery, they were utterly ruined. Many of the *aimadars* without obtaining their object died from the heat caused by the press of the crowds of petitioners. Though a report of this came to the ears of His Majesty, no one dared to take these unfortunate people before the Emperor. And when the Shaikh, in all his pride and haughtiness, sat upon his *Masnad* (cushion); and influential *grandees* introduced to him, in his office, scientific or pious men, the Shaikh received them in his filthy way, paid respect to no one, and after much asking, begging and exaggerating, he allowed, for example, a teacher of the *Hidayah* (a book on law) and other college books, 100 *bighas*, more or less; and though such a man might have been for a long time in possession of more extensive lands the Shaikh took them away. But to men of no renown, to low fellows, even to *Hindus*, he gave free-hold lands as marks of personal favour. Hence science and scientific men fell in estimation. * * *

The fate of Abdul Nabi has been related above. Akbar gave him money for the poor of Mecca and sent him on a pilgrimage. When he came back, he was called to account for the money was put in prison, and murdered 'by some scoundrel' in 992 A.H.

The next *Cadr* was Sultan Khwájah. Matters relating to *Sayúrgháls* now took a very different course. Akbar had by this time rejected Islam, and the new *Cadr*, who had just returned from Makkah, became a member of the Divine Faith. The systematic persecution of the learned and the lawyers had commenced, and His Majesty inquired personally into all grants (vide *Ferishta*, p. 189, last para.). The lands were now steadily withdrawn, and according to Badaoni, who had managed to get 1,000 bighas at first, to the great disgust of Abdul Nabi, many a Mahommedan family was impoverished or utterly ruined.

In 993, Fathullah, of Shíráz (vide *Ferishta*, p. 38), was appointed *Cadr*. As the *Sayúrghál* duties, and with them the dignity of the *Cadr* had dwindled down to nothing, Fathullah, though *Cadr*, could be spared for missions to the Dakhin. Bad., p. 343.

“His Shírázi servant Kamal officiated for him during his absence, and looked after these lacklands of *aimadars*, who had a few spots here and there; for the dignity of the *Cadr* had approached its *kamal* (perfection). Fathullah had not even the power of conferring five bighas; in fact he was an imaginary *Cadr*, as all lands had been withdrawn. And yet the lands which had been withdrawn became the dwelling-places of wild animals, and thus belonged neither to the *aimadars* nor to farmers. However, of all these oppressions, there is at least a record left in the books of the *Cadr*, though of the office of the *Cadr* the name only is left.

(*Ferishta*, page 368.) Fathullah (the *Cadr*, himself) laid before His Majesty a bag containing the sum of Rs. 1,000, which his collector by means of oppression, or under the pretext that an *aimadar* was not forthcoming or was dead, had squeezed out of the widows and unfortunate orphans of the Pergunnah of Basawar (which was his *jagir*), and said “My collectors have collected this much from the *aimadars* as a *kifayat* (i.e., because the collectors thought the *Sayúrghál* holders had more than sufficient to live upon).” But the Emperor allowed him to keep the sum for himself.

The next *Cadr*, *Cadr* Jahan, was a member of the Divine Faith. Though appointed *Cadr* immediately after the death of

Fathullah, Badaoni continues calling him Mufti-i-mamalik-i-mahrusah, the Mufti of the Empire, which had been his title before. Perhaps it was no longer necessary to have a separate officer for the *Cadrship*. *Cadr* Jahan continued to serve under Jahangir.

A great portion of the *Sayurgah* lands is specified by Abul Fazl in the geographical tables of the Third Book.

CHAPTER III.

THE PHYSIQUE, FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF THE MUSALMANS OF BENGAL.

WHATEVER might have been the facial and other characteristics of the original Musalman settlers, all the lineaments and traits thereof have been effaced and obliterated in their descendants in this country, by the effects of the climate and soil, during a long process of time. The fair and ruddy complexion of the Mughals and Pathans and the courage and valour of the Arabs and Ajams are no longer therefore to be found in their posterity in this country. It is indeed hardly possible for a race to maintain its peculiar characteristics against the influence of a foreign climate and of intercourse with foreign people, coupled with the stress of a hard life and poverty. Brahmans, Rajputs and Englishmen are said to have sprung from the same Aryan stock. But is it possible to guess from their appearance and habits that the Brahmans and the English are of the same stock? The difference between them is as wide as that between the heaven and the earth. Professions and callings also bring about some modification in the physical appearance of men. See how a hunter's complexion and appearance

becomes altered by exposure to sun and rain. Above all, the effects of poverty are most pernicious. Notwithstanding these several causes, there yet exists a material difference between the physical constitution and appearances of those Musalmans of Bengal who are descended from Arabs and Ajams and the Hindus of this country. This difference would be most conspicuous if a comparison were made between persons of equal positions in the two communities, and who were also pursuing the same calling.

Let us now consider the evidence of language. The dialects of the Musalmans of Bengal and its accentuation differ widely from those of their Hindu neighbours. The Bengali language as spoken by these Musalmans has an admixture of Arabic and Persian words which fact is indicative of their foreign descent; for change of religion does not necessitate a change in language. Had these Musalmans owed their origin to the conversion of the Hindus, they would have certainly spoken the same language as the Hindus. Moreover, the habits and customs of these Musalmans are quite dissimilar from those of their Hindu countrymen. This difference would be fully perceptible on a close examination of the modes of life and avocations followed by the males and females of these two communities. These evidences show that the major part of the large Musalman section of the Bengal population are descended from Arab, Iranian, Turkish and Afghan ancestors.

Mr. H. H. Risley, who was deputed by Government to make an ethnographical survey of the tribes and castes of Bengal, has recently published a book

containing the results of his enquiries. As this work bears directly on the subject of our enquiry (the origin of the Musalmans of Bengal), it is desirable to notice here some of the operations of the ethnographical survey which have reference to the Musalmans.

It is to be regretted that this official gentleman, while taking scientific measurements of the different races of Bengal, has committed a grave and grievous mistake, by which the Musalmans are placed in a disadvantageous light. The error is this: he has dealt with the Hindu community according to the order of its organization, deducing results of physical measurements separately for each of the castes into which the community is divided according to the various professions of the men. But with reference to the Musalmans, he has treated them *en masse* without any regard to their races and professions, working out but one result for the whole community in general; although there are many different races among the Musalmans of this country, such as the descendants of Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Afghans, and other foreign nations, as also of the various tribes of Hindustan, who had embraced Islam, and also men of different professions in this community. Professions, no doubt, produce appropriate effects on the physique of men, more especially on that of the agriculturists and labourers in the fields, who are greatly exposed to the influences of the weathers, and who form more than 62 per cent. of the Musalman population of Bengal. Such being the case, we question the accuracy of Mr. Risley's plan in finding a single result for all the Musalmans taken as a

whole, and then comparing that solitary result with those of the separate castes of the Hindus. In this respect injustice has certainly been done to the Musalmans.

It is indeed almost difficult to accurately trace the origin of the Musalmans of this country; and although much change has taken place in their physical constitution owing to their intermingling with other races and from the effects of climate, soil, food, and modes of life, and in consequence of their professions and habits, yet a close examination of their forms and features, habits, and customs, would show that most of these Musalmans are descended from foreign ancestors. Correct results from comparison are obtainable only when the average result of the physical examination of a certain number of Musalmans professing one calling is compared with that of an equal number of men of any other race pursuing the same profession. Or, if the Musalman and Hindu communities were each properly classified according to rank, and then the men of one of the classes of the one were compared to those of the corresponding class of the other, fairly correct results can also be secured.

The result of Mr. Risley's anthropological survey, which had been submitted by him to the Ethnological Society of England, was thus epitomized in the *Oudh Akhbar* of the 15th September 1890:—

“The physical measurements and anthropological examination of the people have revealed the existence of two distinct races of men in Bengal, namely, the Aryan and the aboriginal. The former is represented by the Brahmans, Rajputs, and Sikhs. These generally have tall forms, light complexion and

fine noses, and are in general appearance superior to the middle class of Europeans. The Kols are a specimen of the latter. These have short stature, dark complexion, and snub noses, and approach the African blacks in appearance. All eminent anthropologists agree in considering the nasal index the most valuable race characteristic, and the observations made in India also lend support to this opinion. The races and tribes of Bengal are quite confused and blended. The social rank of a race becomes reduced in proportion to the increased flatness of the nose. The lower a man's origin the flatter is his nose, as resembling those of the African negroes; the higher his origin the more he resembles the Europeans in appearance."

Mr. Risley's statement, that the Brahmans, Rajputs, and Sikhs represent the Aryan race, strikes us as strange. For the Sikhs are not, in fact, any particular race, nor does the term in any way imply ethnological affinity between the individuals who come under that category. Any person, whether of Aryan or non-Aryan origin, who embraces the doctrines promulgated by Baba Nanak is called a Sikh. The term is the class name of a religious sect and not of any particular race or a branch of a race. Sikh is a Panjabi term meaning a "disciple." Baba Nanak, the founder of the sect, addressed his disciples by this name. These disciples were called by their posterity "Guru ke Sekh," *i.e.*, the disciples of the founder of the religion. Any person, whether of high or low origin, becomes a Sikh on going through the initiatory ceremony which they call *Pahel*. The following are the rituals of the ceremony:—*Sharbat* is prepared by dissolving *batashas* into water; into this *sharbat*, the *guru* or the priest dips the toe of his right foot; he then puts the point of a naked sword into it,

and afterwards imbibes a portion of it himself, and then gives the remainder to the novice to drink; and also sprinkles on his face a little of the *sharbat*, instructing him at the same time in the canons formulated by Gobind Singh, their tenth *guru*, and enjoins upon him the due observance of those doctrines. There have been ten *gurus* of the Sikh creed,—from Guru Nanak down to Guru Govind Singh. All these Gurus belonged to the Khettri caste.

It is mentioned in the history called *The Makhzan-i-Panjab* in respect to the races of the provinces.

“Be it known that the Sikhs predominate in the northern and the eastern parts of the Panjab. This (preponderance of the Sikhs) is mainly due to the fact that because this country remained for a long time subject to the Government of the Sikhs, the respect and esteem commanded by them induced most of the Hindus to turn Sikhs; even the *meheters* and sweepers used to undergo the *Pahel* (the Sikh baptismal ceremony) and were called ‘Dharanghareti Sikhs.’ Among the followers of this faith there are Hindus of every caste. But after one has undergone the *Pahel* ceremony, his former nationality is altogether changed, and he becomes a Sikh.”

Likewise there are both Musalmans and Hindus among the Rajput tribe. Those of the tribe that adhere to the religion of their fathers, as well as those who have embraced Islam or those descended from them are all Rajputs. In the Panjab there are countless Musalman Rajputs.

Great injustice has indeed been done to the Musalmans by Mr. Risley. His book entitled “*The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*” contains the following table of

the average height and width of the noses of the different sects and castes inhabiting this country :—

Names of the Tribes of Bengal.	Average nasal height.	Average nasal width.
Brahman	49·7	35
Musalman	49·4	38·3
Kayestha	50·2	35·3
Bagdi	46·7	37·6
Baori	46·6	36·7
Chandal	96·2	36·7
Goalah	49	36·4
Kybatta	48	36·6
Mali	43·9	41·5
Mal Behari	44·1	41
Mochi	49·1	41
Pod	49·1	36·8
Rajbansi	48·9	37·5
Shadgop	45·6	37·7

According to this table, the average nasal height of the Brahmans is 49·7 and the width 35, or the height exceeds the width by 14·7 ; and the average nasal height of the Musalmans is given as 49·4 and the width 38·3; the height in this case exceeds the width by 11·1. This difference between the excesses of the nasal heights of the two has accrued owing to the different castes of the Hindus being severally dealt with and the Musalmans *en masse* and without any classification whatever.

If we average the nasal heights and the widths of twelve individuals of the twelve Hindu castes mentioned in the above table, *viz.* (1) Brahman ; (2) Kayestha ; (3) Bagdi ; (4) Baori ; (5) Chandul ; (6) Goalah ; (7) Kybatta ; (8) Mali ; (9) Mochi ; (10) Pod ; (11) Rajbansi ; (12) Shadgop ; and, likewise, those of

twelve different Musalmans,—according to the figures given in the book under notice ; the mean nasal height of the Hindus would be 47·8 and the width 36·5 ; or the height exceeding the width by 11·1, and those of the Musalmans 50·2 and 38·8, respectively ; the nasal height exceeding the width by 11·4. It is remarkable that the slight modification, *viz.*, averaging the given figures, gives quite a new turn to the results.

Another remarkable fact is that in the book in question the particulars of measurements of the Musalmans of Eastern Bengal alone, are laid down. The anomaly seems to have been carried to further excess, as we find that altogether 185 Musalman subjects were examined. Out of this number, 27 in Chittagong ; 57 in Mymensingh ; 13 in Tipperah ; 38 in Dacca ; 33 in Faridpore ; and the remaining 17 in Barisal, Noakhally and Pabna. But as regards the Hindu subjects, they were examined in equal numbers in all the Eastern, Central and Western Districts of Bengal.

The names of the subjects mentioned in the book engendered the suspicion that none but the lowest orders of Musalmans were examined ; and in order to satisfy myself on this point, I interrogated on the subject the Hospital Assistant, Babu Komod Behari Samanta, who during the operations assisted Mr. Risley, and to whom the work of the anthropological measurements of the subjects in Bengal was exclusively entrusted. I learnt from him that he purposely did not take the measurements of any Musalman of birth, position and respectability, but of only their lowest classes, because he said it was the express order of

Mr. Risley to take measurements of only the low-class Musalmans of Eastern Bengal, and of these not even to examine nor include in the records of his examinations the physical measurements of such as possessed regular features. For this reason he visited some of the jails of the Eastern Districts of Bengal, and took the measurements of some prisoners therein, and transmitted them to Mr. Risley, by whom they were ultimately embodied in his work under notice.

The order of Mr. Risley, to examine exclusively the low-class Musalmans of Eastern Bengal, and even of these not to record the measurements of those who possessed symmetrical features, is certainly a most curious and peculiar one. Komod Babu himself says that the nature of the order is an inexplicable mystery to him. Under these circumstances, how can Mr. Risley's opinion regarding the Musalmans be just and favourable to them? And how can the results of his anthropological and ethnographical examinations of the Musalmans, as recorded in his book, be correct and reliable?

We, however, assert that, apart from all technical and scientific considerations, any person who possesses the least degree of judgment can perceive that the generality of the Musalmans of Bengal have better forms, features and colour than the other races of this country; in other words, the "tall figure, light complexion, fine nose and generally good appearance," which, according to Mr. Risley's opinion, are the data of a superior race, are more to be met with among the high-class Musalmans than among the Hindus of an equal class. As regards the nasal index, which is deemed

to be the most valuable race characteristic, we perceive this peculiarity that the noses of the non-Aryan inhabitants of this country are wide, small and thick ; while those of the generality of the Musalmans are thin, high and erect. In short, the noses of the high-born Musalmans are generally finer than those of the Hindus of the same position ; and likewise the noses of the lower orders of the former are better than those of the same classes of the latter. An examination of the noses of these two people alone would show that the generality of the Musalmans of this country are not descended from the original native races and tribes of Bengal.

CHAPTER IV.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT MUSALMAN FAMILIES IN BENGAL.

It is very difficult to give the history of the ancient Musalman families in Bengal. For many of them have been so wrecked and ruined that even the members thereof hardly know their own lineage and the particulars of their ancestors ; ignorance and poverty have so much reduced them to a low position that they are now altogether fused with the masses. Again, often the heads of some of the high and noble families have had to fly for their lives to some remote and insulated part of the country on the revolutions of Government, where they concealed their identity and passed their lives in obscurity. This practice had to be resorted to, not only during the time of the Mughal supremacy, but on the occasion of each change of Government, both before and after that epoch. The descendants of these refugees generally lived so long in a degraded condition that this altered state became at last the natural condition of their families. Many a family have also sunk gradually into utter obscurity owing to the growing ignorance of its members.

Those ancient families that have been safe from the destructive operations of the above-mentioned causes are

still numerous in Bengal. We are unable to enumerate them all for the reasons (i) that *all* of them are not known to us ; (ii) that they are so numerous that a mere catalogue of them would fill volumes. But we shall give the particulars of some of the ancient and well-known families by way of illustration.

It should, in the first place, be understood that there are four principal races, *viz.*, (1) Syyads ; (2) Shaikhs ; (3) Mughals and (4) Pathans, that are considered to constitute the Musalman gentry in this country.

(1) The Syyyad race take the precedence of the other three in rank, and is generally esteemed the most dignified. This noble race is divided into two main lines,—one is the branch of the Beni Fatemite Syyads, and the other that of the Ulvi Beni Fatemite Syyads. Those who are descended from Hasan or Husain (the peace of God be on them !), that is to say, those descended from Hazarat Ali and his wife, the holy Lady Fatema (may the mercy of God be on them !) are called Fatemite Syyads. The Ulvi Syyads are those who are descended from (Hazrat) Ali by his wives other than the Lady Fatema. The Fatemite Syyads are superior in rank to the Ulvi Syyads as being the descendants of the Prophet Mahommed (peace be on him !). The Fatemite branch of the Syyads has, again, several offshoots, each of which is denominated by the name of any of the twelve Imams (peace on them !), or to speak more definitely, the line of each of these Imam descendants is designated according to his own name ; such as the Hosaini Syyads, Hasani Syyads, Moosavi Syyads, Razvi Syyads, Kazemi Syyads,

Takavi Syyads, Nakavi Syyads, and so on. Likewise some of the Syyads name their lines after those of some renowned eminent men among their ancestors, such as Zaidi, Ismaili, Taba Tabai, Kadri, and the like. Some families are designated by the land they inhabit, as Bokhari, Kermani, Tabrezi, Shabzawari, &c. Those Syyads that are descended, on their father's and mother's sides, from (Hazrats) Hasan and Hosain are distinguished as Hasani-ul-Hosaini, and are foremost in rank and dignity among all the rest of the branches and families of the Syyads.

(2) *Koraishi Shaikhs*.—This race is very respectable, for the Prophet of God (may peace be on him !) belonged to the stock from which it has sprung. Several lines branch out from this race ; each line bearing the name of the *Sehabie* (or companion of the Prophet) from which it has descended, as, for instance, Siddiki, Farooki, Asmani, Abbasi, Khaledi, and the like. Both the Syyads and Koraishi Shaikhs are of Arab origin. In Iran, Afghanistan and Khorasan, the descendants of great saints, renowned, learned men and celebrated ecclesiastics are also surnamed Shaikhs.

(3) *Mughal*.—This is a Mongolian race ; Chinghiz Khan was the greatest monarch of this race. The religion of this people was originally Paganism. But after Chinghiz Khan's grandson embraced Islam, masses of this nation, following the example of their king, became converted to this faith. All the kings of the Chaghtai line were Musalmans. It was due to the Mughal dominion in India that this race became largely introduced among the Indian population. These people

have the appellation of Mirza or Beg. There are many branches and offshoots of this race.

(4) *Pathans*.—This is an Afghan race, and its original home is Afghanistan. It was owing to the Pathans holding sway for a long time in India that this people has become so largely diffused over this country. They are designated *Khans*. This race also has many branches and ramifications.

It is to be added that men belonging to the native races of this country who embraced Islam were, as a matter of courtesy, denominated either *Shaikh* or *Khan* or *Malick*.

Of the four principal races mentioned above, a great majority of the Musalman population of Bengal is composed of the various classes of Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans, or to speak more definitely of the Syyads, Hasani-ul Hosaini, Hasaini, Hosaini, Razwi Musawi, Nakwi, Takwi, Zaidi, Ismaili, Taba-Tabai, Ulvi, Bokhari, Kermani, Shabzawari, &c., &c., and of the Shaikhs, Siddiki, Farooki, Osmani, Abbasi, Khaledi, Harssi, &c. ; and Mirzas, Begs, and Khans, that is, Mughals and Pathans.

Venerable and eminent Syyads and Shaikhs who, during the time of the kings of Gaur, occupied themselves in imparting religious instruction to the people and as spiritual leaders were venerated by the Court, and distinguished by the titles of *Shah* or *Khondkar*. Their descendants, up to the present day, bear these ecclesiastical designations. The application of the appellation *Khondkar* is local to this country. Since the time of the kingdom of Gaur it has been in use to

denominate venerable ecclesiastics and their descendants here. Among the Mughals and Pathans there is a class called *Malick*, an epithet of distinction pertaining chiefly to the Ghorî and Khiljî Ameers (chiefs and noblemen). But these Ameers sometimes honoured proselytes from the Hindu religion with their own title and called them *Malicks* as themselves. Henceforth they and their descendants have borne that appellation. Sundry other Musalman converts and their descendants are likewise known by the appellations of Shaikh and Khan. Among the classes called Shaikh, Khan and Malick there are both well-born and low-born men. The classes called Kazi and Chaudhari belong to one or the other of the four foreign races, *viz.*, Shaikh, Syiad, Mughal and Pathan. They hold this surname owing to some one of their ancestors having filled some official position and acquired a corresponding designation. There are some Musalmans in this country who, although of a purely Arab origin, are called, as a matter of respect, Thakur, which is the special denomination of the leading men of the Hindus. And others, because their ancestors were originally Hindu Thakurs, Biswas and the like, retained their caste denominations even after their conversion, and their descendants are called by those appellations up to this day. Among the gentry of this country there are some families who can trace up their genealogical tree even to Adam (may peace be on him !). Among them also are high-born persons who have descended from a line of ancestors whose male and female sides were of equally high origin and respectability, never intermarrying beyond the circle of their own kith and

kin, or under any circumstance forming any unequal connections.

With regard to the four old divisions of Bengal, *viz.*, Rarh, Barind, Bagri and Bangodesh, the Musalman gentry live chiefly in the first and the last, and the common people in the remaining two. Again, the descendants of the Musalmans of the times of the Ghorî and the Khiljî dynasties predominate in Rarh and Barind, and those of the Musalman comers during the Mughal period in Bangodesh and Bagri. The former live mostly in rural parts, and the latter reside chiefly in cities and towns and their immediate surroundings. The great majority of the good and high families live in the villages and hamlets, the reason of which, as has been already stated, was that in former times, cities and towns were much liable to the disasters attending the revolutions of Governments, and were frequently made the scenes of political tragedies, and also that *Aïmas*, *Madadî-mî'âsh* and similar other grants made by the rulers to the gentry lay commonly in rural parts, and consequently the grantees went to live on their estates in those parts. This state of things was not peculiar to Bengal, but general to all parts of Hindustan, and gave occasion to a very large number of noble families living in the country throughout India.

We will now briefly notice the particulars of some of the eminent families in Bengal. The most noble and pre-eminent family is that of the Nawab Nazim, in Murshidabad, which is unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by any family in the whole of India. This great family belongs to the Taba-Tabai branch of the Hasani-ul

Hosani Syyads. Wherever and whenever the collateral branches of this family have lived, they have invariably exercised power and commanded general respect. The most exalted aristocratic rank of this family is only equalled by the great dignity of its highly distinguished origin. The particulars of this family are given in great detail in the *Undatul Taleb Fi Ansabi al-i Abi Taleb* in the *Tarikhi Mansuri*.

In the city of Murshidabad and its environs many ancient families of Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans reside. Among the gentry of the Mufassil, the Syyads of Fateh Singh, Soonti and Balghattiaa, and the Khondkars of Fateh Singh, and also the Kazis and Chaudharies are famous for their good descent, and their families are very ancient and respectable. The Khondkars of the locality are descended from the very old and respectable line of Abu Bakr, the first Khalif. Kazi Shaikh Sirajuddin, their ancestor, came to Bengal in the reign of Sultan Ghias-uddin, King of Gaur, and was afterwards elevated to the bench of the Quazi-ul Quzzat or Chief Justice of the Metropolitan city of Gaur. This family is distinguished for the good origin of both its male and female ascending lines. Sultan Ghias-uddin reigned from 769 to 775 Hijrees.

In the district of Birbhoom, the Syyads, Shaikhs and Pathans constitute the Musalman gentry. Of these, the Syyads, Shaikhs and Chaudharies of Khooshtigiri, Damdama, Nawadah, Hazratpore, Surgaun, Mandgaun, &c., and the Pathans of Nagar and other places, are very famous. The Syyads of Khooshtigiri and other localities are of a highly respectable origin, and their

families are of great antiquity. Their common ancestor came to this country in 899 Hijree, in the reign of Feroze Shah, King of Gaur, and their forefathers have always occupied positions of honour and dignity.

Among the numerous gentle families in the district of Burdwan, the most ancient and eminent are those of the Syysads of Jafarabad, Raigaun, Changharia, Bagha, &c., the Khondkars of Samsar, Sayer, Moorgaun, Kasyarah, &c., and the Shaikhs of Mangalkot, Jhiloo, Aral, Keogaun and other places.

In the district of Hughly, Pundwa is important as a place of residence, from a very remote period, of a large congregation of ancient and respectable Musalman families. There are also other places in this district where high and good Musalman families reside.

Among the gentry of Midnapore the Syysads and Pathans are very famous.

In the district of the 24-Pergunnahs, ever since Calcutta became the capital of India, every description of Musalmans have flocked to it and make up an important section of the metropolitan population; and among these there are many of a high birth and distinguished origin. In the Mufassil, too, there are good and respectable families of Musalmans.

Among the gentry, of the district of Nadia, the Khondkars of Bamanpokhur and the Syysads and Khondkars of Betai, Meherpore and other places are famous for their distinguished lineage.

In the district of Rajshahi, the Khondkars of Bogra and Nattore are very famous for their noble origin. They belong to the race of Abbasi Shaikhs, and are

descended from the Caliph Harun-al-Rashid. Their family is very ancient in this country. It came here during the period of the Gaur kings, and has ever been held in high estimation and great respect. Their ancestors Khondkar Moin-ul-Islam, Khondkar Badr-ul-Islam and Khondkar Rafi-ul-Islam occupied pre-eminent positions and were among the leading men of their times, and mention of them is made in the various histories of Bengal, in connection with the accounts of the kings of Gaur. The Pathans of Nattore and other places are also very famous.

In the district of Maldah, the Syyads and Pathans are very famous for their good lineage and honourable descent.

In the city of Dacca and its surrounding parts there are numerous respectable and ancient families of Syyads, Shaikhs, Kazis, Shahs and other races and classes of the Musalmans.

In the districts of Faridpore, Mymensingh, Jessore, Pabna, Deenajpore, Rangpore, Bakarganj, Noakholly and Comillah there are numerous high and good families of Syyads, Shaikhs, Pathans, &c.; so also in the district of Sylhet and the adjoining districts. Likewise there are numbers of respectable and ancient families of Musalmans in the district of Chittagong and the adjacent districts. Besides the above there are countless other noble, high, respectable and ancient Musalman families in Bengal, but my limited information on the subject and the narrow scope of this chapter preclude any special mention of them here, for which shortcoming I hope to be excused.

CHAPTER V.

THE OCCUPATION OF THE MUSALMANS.

ACCORDING to the ancient and prevailing customs among the well-born Musalmans, that is to say, among the Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans of Arab, Turkish, Iranian and Afghan origin, the best and most honourable mode in their opinion, of gaining their livelihood, was by the professions of the sword and the pen, and also from the income and realization of landed states and property. All professions except these two and all handicrafts and shop-keeping were regarded by them as derogatory to their rank and dignity. Moreover, it was not allowable for them, according to their notions of respectability, to till and cultivate lands with their own hands ; and they used to have their lands cultivated by hired labour, and so to reap the benefit from their produce. Whoever departed from these established customs was looked down upon by the whole class, and lost the good opinion of his fellows.

These usages were not peculiar to the high class Musalmans, but were also in full force among the high caste Hindus. Formerly no Rajput could pursue any other calling than that of the sword, nor could a Brahman adopt any other except the ecclesiastical profession.

But times have changed, and with them these old and inconvenient customs. The Rajputs have gone beyond the limited scope allowed to their operations by their caste laws which bound them to a single kind of profession, and are found engaged in various occupations, even tilling their lands with their own hands. The Brahmans have also done the same, and are employed in various services and pursue various callings and live on incomes derived from landed property, the only prohibition of custom is against driving the plough with their own hands ; but they may perform all other agricultural functions, as those that can be done with the spade, hoe, scythe, or other implements, and also such as sowing, the transplantation of seedling, the weeding, and irrigation of the fields, the reaping of corns, the gathering in of the harvest, and the such other work.

Formerly the proper and decent way for the Musalman gentry to gain their livelihood was, as has been mentioned before, by means of civil and military professions, and from the income of lands. But when these sources failed them, they were obliged to take up different kinds of arts and professions, to enter into various services and to engage in agricultural labour. The soldier classes, when they failed to obtain military employment, took exclusively to agriculture, considering all other occupation as unsuited to their temperament. But among the superior classes of Musalmans and Hindus certain kinds of service and most of the handicrafts are still regarded as highly derogatory, and whoever of them engages in these low occupations becomes

degraded and loses his social position. The result of the high class Musalmans, in former times, considering trade as not a respectable profession, is that there has been scarcely, if ever, any great or rich merchant among the native Musalmans of this country. Musalman traders and shop-keepers found in any part of Hindustan are mostly descended from Hindu ancestors belonging to the trading classes, who even after their conversion to the Mahommedan faith have adhered to their ancestral profession and also have bred up their children in the same profession.

If, however, any Musalman of birth, belonging to the pure race of Syiads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans, is found engaged in trade, which is very rare, and if his case is properly enquired into, he would most probably be found not to belong to any ancient family in this country, or if so, it would then appear that some one of his ancestors had been obliged to engage in this profession under some great emergency and pressing necessity. The fact is, that formerly among the aristocracy and gentry of the Musalmans, their ancient and time-honoured customs which were, indeed, most strict and stringent, held undisputed sway. Being thus precluded, by their old customs, from the best means of increasing their capital, that is, trade, they were unable to augment their national wealth, and have now become reduced to the last degree of poverty and indigence.

The scope of Government service is very narrow in comparison with the wide latitude of trade, and the emolument of the former is far smaller in proportion to the gains of the latter. Lands, too, have a limited

extent, and the profits of agriculture cannot impart so much prosperity as those of commerce. Of all professions trade has the widest latitude : its gains are unbounded and its benefits countless. No nation can acquire wealth and attain prosperity except by trade. The trading nations are the richest and most prosperous in the world. Those who reject trade in fact deprive themselves of the greatest source of wealth.

The Brahmans and Rajputs are, from the same cause, as poor and impecunious as the Musalmans ; while the Jews, although their nation does not possess any territory anywhere in the world, are yet everywhere in affluent and easy circumstances owing to their trading propensities and to the blessings of trade.

Our co-religionists, although they did not view with disapprobation commerce and trade on a large scale, considered, however, shop-keeping and retail-selling as a paltry business and a non-respectable one. But it should be borne in mind that it is very difficult to become a successful merchant at once and without previously having had experience as a shop-keeper and a retail-seller. Indeed, it is only by slow degrees that men can acquire proficiency in any art or trade and derive advantages from them. In the first place, we have not so large a capital that we can at once set up as great merchants, and, in the second place, we cannot expect to derive benefit from commerce and guard against loss, until we have learnt the ways and modes of conducting it. This matter is analogous to the fact that unless a person has once been a school-boy he cannot eventually be a learned professor. The past ages were

quite different from the present times. Formerly men's rank and dignity depended entirely upon their individual merits and personal qualifications, with which wealth and riches had little to do. But the case is just the reverse now, and money outweighs all merits and excellence. Moreover, it is hardly practicable to acquire proficiency in any of the fine arts and sciences without the aid of money. Now-a-days all distinction and superiority accrue from the possession of wealth, and every consideration is subordinate to riches. Even a man's dignity of birth cannot be maintained, nor do his personal merits and excellence stand him in stead, without money. Wherefore, notwithstanding the present altered state of affairs, to still persist in directing the course of life according to the old ideas, is certainly the height of folly. Men ought to conduct themselves according to the requirements of their own times, and they should strive to maintain their position with the means acquired in a fair and a lawful manner, and, if possible, even to improve and better their condition. We may expect, when we consider the good sense and wisdom of our forefathers that, had they lived in times like these, they would have surely regulated their modes of life according to the emergencies of such times, and would have taken care to maintain their rank and position as best they could. For it is usual with wise men to suit themselves to any condition in which they may be placed. The condition of the world is ever on the change, but as it changes, we should change our modes of life accordingly. Wisdom and prudence direct that men should procure their

subsistence and improve their conditions in the manner best suited to their own times.

From what I have stated above regarding the former custom of the high and well-born Musalmans—Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans—in regarding all professions, except those of the pen and the sword, and all occupations, except that of a gentleman farmer, as low and non-respectable; and from the fact of the prevalence of the same custom among the highest castes of the Hindus, namely, Brahmans and Rajputs, it may be surmised that probably the Musalmans had imitated the Hindus in this custom, or that perhaps they were descended from Brahman and Rajput fathers, who even after their conversion to Islam, handed down the customs of their own ancestors to their posterity. But when we find this identical custom to have prevailed among the higher classes of Musalmans in Arabia, Iran, Turkistan and Afghanistan, and the professions of the sword and the pen to be regarded by these nations as the only respectable ones; and, moreover, as we perceive that no Hindu, of whatever rank or caste, can, after his conversion to Islam, become affiliated to any of the four principal Musalman races, for the real Syyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans are those only whose forefathers came to India from Arabia, Iran, Turkistan and Afghanistan, it is consequently certain that this custom was brought in by those foreign fathers and by them transmitted to the succeeding generations. Neither the Hindus nor the Musalmans had learnt this custom from each other. But as the habits and customs of all the Asiatic nations have a

pervading similarity, some customs of the one are found to correspond exactly with those of the other.

Among the rest of the Musalmans, that is, among their lower orders, there are men engaged in various professions and trades. They are variously classed, and each class separately denominated, according as their several occupations and the different trades they pursue, such as Jolha, Dhoonya, &c., &c. These classes, speaking roughly, consist of two breeds of men : those descended from foreign ancestors, and those descended from indigenous races and tribes who have embraced Islam. Each class has followed its ancestral occupations generation after generation, and their respective professions and trades denote the race or tribe from which they are respectively descended. That is to say, those of native origin are ethnologically allied to those native castes and tribes who pursue the same trade or have the same occupation as they.

But among the Musalmans there are not men of those very mean and dirty occupations as there are among the Hindus. For in no part of Bengal is there a single Musalman sweeper, scavenger or nightman or the like. The fact is a remarkable one, as it shows that even the lowest classes of the Musalmans are not descended from the lowest Hindu tribes. Such menial occupations only as are followed in Arabia, Iran, &c., are likewise pursued here by the Musalman population. As there are no scavengers and nightmen in those countries, so there are none among the Musalmans here.

Although manual occupations were generally held in disrepute among the higher classes of Musalmans

formerly, yet there were some particular arts and crafts which were regarded by them as respectable occupations, and skill in those arts was deemed an accomplishment. For instance, sewing, needle-work and spinning were greatly in vogue among the ladies of the nobility and the gentry. These arts gave means of subsistence to poor ladies and gave employment to the rich in their leisure hours, and saved them from the evils of idleness. They were consequently much in fashion among all classes, and a proficiency in them was considered a great female accomplishment. Nor was it in any way disgraceful for them to have the produce of such labours sold through the medium of a third person. Such occupations were not restricted to the ladies exclusively, but some pious and godly persons also followed them as the purest and fairest means of deriving their livelihood. For instance, it is mentioned in histories in regard to the lives of some illustrious monarchs that, notwithstanding that they had the revenues of whole kingdoms and empires at their command, they used to procure their own subsistence by manual labour, as by preparing and selling caps and the like.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE MUSALMANS OF BENGAL.

WE have already proved what is really the origin of the Musalmans of Bengal, and have also shown the reasons why they are so numerous in this country. We now propose to give some particulars of their present condition, as a necessary sequel to the various information contained in this book.

The Musalmans of this country were in a prosperous and happy condition during their national government; but on the decline and overthrow of that power, they confided themselves to the care of the English authorities, to enjoy safety of life and property under their protection. For some time their hopes were fully realized; and so long as their rules and practices formed the principles of the British administration, they continued to be benefited by that Government, so much so that their thoughts were scarcely turned towards the future. The unprecedented safety of person and property, which they enjoyed under the British régime, was really a great boon to them. The principles of Government were, however, gradually changed, and the administration was ultimately remodelled upon an entirely new

plan. But unfortunately the Musalmans could not so alter their course of conduct as to suit the changes in the administration, and they adhered to their former modes of life and their old habits.

On the one hand, the Musalmans, partially from improvidence and partially from their religious prejudices, held off from English education, and held to their national literatures, *viz.*, the Arabic and the Persian. The result of their backwardness was that they were deprived of the immense advantages accruing from an English education. Would that the matter had been otherwise ! For in that case the Musalmans of Bengal would have this day been much in advance of their co-religionists in other parts of India who are making rapid progress, and they could have even surpassed their Hindu countrymen in political power and ascendancy because, with regard to the other parts of India, the Musalmans of this country came earlier in contact with the British nation, and were at the outset more directly connected with the English administration than the Hindus.

On the other hand, the English authorities, owing to their being strangers to the country, could not rightly judge the wishes and feelings of Musalmans ; and so they suspected their loyalty, thinking that, as they had been supplanted in the ruling power by the British nation, they must naturally entertain hostile feelings and might on occasion act treacherously towards them. The authorities thought further that as the Hindus were the original inhabitants of the country they ought to be given every encouragement and help. Being thus

prejudiced against the Musalmans and prepossessed in favour of the Hindus, the rulers began to repress the former and make much of the latter. But their bias towards one side and consequently against the other was quite unwarranted by reason. For while the Musalmans had voluntarily favoured the cause of the English when yet possessing power, how, then, might they be reasonably imagined to entertain hostility when they no longer possessed the power to give effect to such hostility? Nor could it be right to think of the Hindus as the original inhabitants of this country, for the aboriginal races are the Kols, Sonthals, Bheels, and the like tribes: these and not the Hindus were the first inhabitants of this country. If the Hindus be of the Aryan stock, then the only difference between their relation to these lands and that of the native Musalmans is that they came to this country, from Central Asia, a few centuries prior to the Musalmans.

At last the improvidence of the Musalmans, coupled with the prejudice of the authorities, has produced this dire result, that the Musalmans have become almost totally estranged from all departments of State employment. This circumstance has operated most injuriously on the ancient and high families of the Musalmans, and has, in course of time, caused the utter ruin of many such families and threatens all of them with the same fate. But the common orders of the Musalmans who are most numerous in this country and whose occupation is cultivation, and also those who, failing to obtain State service, have engaged in agricultural pursuits, have been increasing in prosperity, owing to

the thriving condition of trade and the outlets thereby opened for agricultural produce, and also owing to the internal peace and the security of property afforded by the British Government. The labouring classes are also in a comfortable and happy condition owing to the increased and rising rates of wages. Consequently, in our opinion, all the inhabitants of this country have been benefited by the British rule, except the high and ancient Musalman families—almost all of whom have been reduced to a deplorable condition, while many of them have been totally wrecked and ruined.

It now remains to be considered whether the Musalmans of this country are agreeable to the British rule, and whether they entertain sentiments of loyalty towards that Government. Let Sir W. W. Hunter or Colonel Nassau Lees say on this matter whatever they please, but, so far as we are aware of the state of feelings of our co-religionist countrymen, as being ourselves of their class and community, we can fully affirm that we Musalmans are not in the least ill-wishers to the Government, and that it is not for a moment our wish that the British Government should be supplanted in this country by either the Russian Power or even by the Amir of Cabul, although the latter is the Musalman ruler of a neighbouring country. In fact, all that we seek and desire is our own welfare and safety, and such a desire on our part is by no means opposed to other religious or social institutions. On the contrary, it is incumbent upon us to seek our personal welfare and benefit without causing harm or doing wrong to others. Our Holy Prophet (may the peace and mercy of God

be on him !) has directed us to quit even the Kaba, the House of God, if there be no peace and security within its precincts, and to seek the same in the territory of the Christian King of Abyssinia, if to be found there.* This is the Prophet whom we follow, and his injunctions do we obey, and we seek our welfare in the manner indicated by him. ✓ The only complaint we have is with regard to the apathy of Government towards us and our sinking condition. We make this complaint because through such unconcern and indifference on the part of Government, we are gradually sinking lower. Should, however, any one arbitrarily and unjustly interpret this as a sign of disaffection on the part of us Musalmans, let him do so. Being victims of the errors of our rulers, in not obtaining our due share, we are waiting, full of impatient expectations, to see what justice the Government in its paternal care to our claims will do.

* During the early days of Islam, while it barely maintained itself in the Hashimite quarter of Mecca, and Mahomed relied for protection against the unbelieving Koreish mainly upon his uncle Abu Talib in the fifth year of the Prophet's ministry, took place the first Hegira or flight from the land of persecution to "a country wherein no one was wronged,—a land of righteousness." This was the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia ruled over by the Najashee or Negus, "a just king." Among the emigrants on this occasion were the Prophet's own son-in-law, Othman, the son of Affan, and his wife, the Prophet's daughter. Here the emigrants were kindly treated, and all the efforts of the Koreish to dislodge them were unavailing. Next year, the sixth of the ministry, the persecution at Mecca redoubling, a second emigration thither took place, more numerous than the first, so that we are told, the number of the Faithful in this Christian country reached 101, without counting their little ones. Here they dwelt in peace and quietness: many of them remained till long after the victorious promulgation of Islam, and did not rejoin Mahomed until the expedition to Khaiber, in the seventh year of the Hegira.—*Rauzat-us-Safu*.

We trust, however, that when our rulers become better acquainted with us, they will surely show a greater consideration for us.

Note to Chapter 1.

The Census of 1891 shows that in Bengal Mahomedans have increased by 1,953,620. In 1881 their number was 21,704,727, and in 1891 was 23,658,347. It is most probable that the proselytizing character of Islam has gained some converts, but the actual conversion from other faiths to that of Islam, during the decade of 1881—1891, has had very little to do with the cause of this increase. On this point the Census Officer's remarks in the Census Report are just and correct. He says: "It is certain that the growth of Musalmanism in Bengal Proper, is connected rather with physical than doctrinal forces." It is not statistically proved that any part of Bengal contains a very considerable number of converts who were non-Musalman in 1881, but embraced Islam within the last ten years; neither is it shown by figures that any particular district of Bengal has added a few hundreds of converts to the church of Islam. The increase of Musalmans, as disclosed by the Census of 1891, resulted partly from the better management with which the last Census operations were carried on, and chiefly from the fact that the Musalmans who, formerly, being under a false impression that the object of the Census was either to levy some new tax per head or to recruit men for the army from among them, concealed their real number, have now, by lapse of time and experience,

had these misapprehensions removed and therefore gave an accurate enumeration of themselves and the members of their family. The increase of Musalmans is also largely due to polygamy and widow-re-marriage, which are specially more common among the people of the eastern districts where the Mahomedan population is predominant. The Musalmans, with their varied and more nutritious dietary, are of superior physique, and this increases their growth and fecundity. Thus one of the striking features which the Census of 1891 presents, is that the Musalmans of Bengal Proper, within the last nineteen years, have not only overtaken their Hindu brethren, but have out-numbered them by a million and-a-half.

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